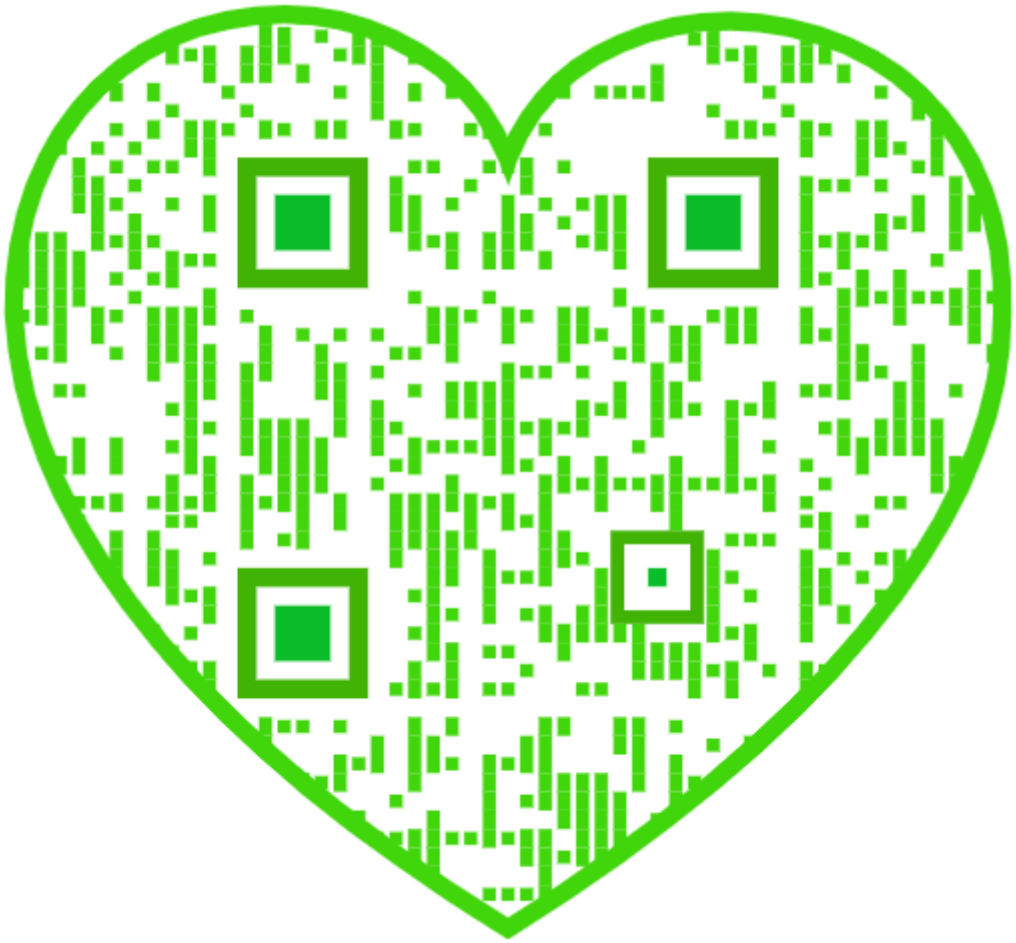

A HISTORY OF LITERATURE IN AMERICA

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PREFACE

When it was proposed that Wendell's *Literary History of America* should be reprinted in a school edition, it was clear to us that for such use the book needed thorough revision. Many passages, which properly found place in a book intended for general reading, involved expressions of opinion obviously unsuitable for schools. In preparing this school version, our object has accordingly been to omit needless or debatable matter, but to preserve the general outline and all available portions of the original work.

To aid us in our task, we submitted the *Literary History*, chapter by chapter, to an advanced class of students at Harvard College, whom we encouraged to criticise it minutely in writing. The energy and good sense with which they did so have enabled us to correct many slight errors, and, at the same time, have strengthened our conviction that the earlier book was historically sound. We cannot too heartily acknowledge our debt to this critical collaboration of our pupils.

B. W.
C. N. G.

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Asterisks indicate the best editions and most useful sources of information.

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A HISTORY OF LITERATURE IN AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE, the lasting expression in words of the meaning of life, is of all fine arts the most national: each language grows to associate with itself the ideals and the aspirations and the fates of those peoples with whose life it is inextricably intermingled. Literature in General.

Languages grow and live and die in accordance with laws of their own. This English of ours may be taken as typical. Originating from the union and confusion of older tongues, it has struggled through the infantile diseases of dialect, each of which has left some trace, until long ago it not only had become the sole means of expression for millions of people, but also had assumed the form which now makes its literature in some respects the most remarkable of modern times. Whatever else it may be, this literature is the most spontaneous, the least formal and conscious, the most instinctively creative, the most free from excess of culture, and so, seemingly, the most normal. Its earliest forms were artless; songs and sayings began to stray from oral tradition into written record, laws were sometimes phrased and chronicles made in the robust young terms which carried meaning to unlearned folk as well as to those versed in more polite tongues, such as French or Latin. Presently came forms of literature which, at least comparatively, were artistic. The earliest of these which has lasted in general literary memory reached its height in the works of Chaucer (about 1340–

1400). After his time came a century or more of civil disturbance, when Englishmen were too busy with wars of the Roses and the like for further progress in the arts of peace. Then, with the new national integrity which grew under the Tudors, came a stronger literary impulse, unsurpassed in vigorous spontaneity.

In 1575 there was hardly such a thing as modern English literature; in 1625 that great body of English literature which we call Elizabethan was complete. Fifty years had given us not only incomparable lyric verse and the final version of the English Bible (1611), but the works too of Spenser (1552–1599), of Shakspere (1564–1616) and the other great dramatists, of Hooker (1553–1600), of Ralegh (1552–1618), of Bacon (1561–1626), and of all their fellows. Among these, of course, Shakspere stands supreme, just as Chaucer stood among his contemporaries, whose names are now forgotten by all but special scholars; and one feature of Shakspere's supremacy is that his literary career was normal. Whoever has followed it from his experimental beginning, through the ripeness to which he brought comedy, history, and tragedy alike, to its placid close amid the decadent formality of another established literary tradition, will have learned something more than even the great name of Shakspere includes,—he will have had a glimpse of the natural law which not only governed the course of Shakspere himself and of Elizabethan literature, but has always governed the growth, development, and decline of all literature and of all fine art. Lasting literature has its birth when a creative impulse, which we may call imaginative, moves men to break the shackles of tradition, making things which have not been before; sooner or later this impulse is

The Law of Literary Evolution.

checked by a growing sense of the inexorable limits of fact and of language; and then creative imagination sinks into some new tradition, to be broken only when, in time to come, the vital force of imagination shall revive.

As English literature has grown into maturity, the constant working of this law has become evident. The first impulse, we have seen, gave us the work of Chaucer; the second, which came only after generations, gave us the Elizabethan lyrics and dramas, Spenser and Shakspere, and the final form of the English Bible. This last, probably the greatest masterpiece of translation in the world, has exercised on the thought and the language of English-speaking people an influence which cannot be overestimated. As a translation, however, it rather indicates how eager Elizabethan Englishmen were to know the splendors of world-old literature, than reveals a spontaneous impulse towards native expression. Apart from this supreme work, the fully developed literature of the Elizabethan period took on the whole the form of poetry; that of the eighteenth century, on the other hand, took on the whole the form of prose; and as English prose literature has developed, no phase of it has developed more highly than its fiction. This general statement is perhaps enough to indicate an important tendency. The first form in which any normal literature develops is instinctively poetic; prose comes later; and prose fiction, that intricate combination of poetic impulse with prosaic form, comes later still. In 1625 English literature was fully developed only in the forms of lyric and dramatic poetry.

America Defined.

It was about this time that America came into existence. It began with a number of mutually independent settlements, each of which grew into something like political

integrity. When the Constitution of the United States was adopted, the sentiment of local sovereignty in the separate States was accordingly too strong to allow the federal power to assume an independent name. As the power thus founded developed into one of the most considerable in modern history, its citizens found themselves driven by this fact of national namelessness to a custom which is often held presumptuous; they called themselves Americans, a name geographically proper to all natives of the Western Hemisphere, from Canada to Patagonia. By this time the custom thus established has given to the name "America" the sense in which we generally use it. The America with whose literary history we are to be concerned is only that part of our continent which is dominated by the English-speaking people now subject to the government of the United States.

A literary history of America should therefore concern itself with such lasting expressions in words of the meaning of life as this people has uttered during its three centuries of existence; or, in simpler terms, with what America has contributed to the literature of the English language.

The Three American Centuries.

In the history of America each century has traits of its own. In 1600 there was no such thing as English-speaking America; in 1700 all but one of the colonies which have developed into the United States were finally established, and the English conquest of the middle colonies founded by the Dutch or the Swedes was virtually complete. In 1700 every one of the American colonies was loyally subject to the government of King William III; in 1800 there remained throughout them no vestige of British authority. In 1800, the last complete year of the

presidency of John Adams, the United States were still an experiment in government, of which the result remained in doubt; the year 1900 found them a power which seems as established and as important as any in the world. Clearly these three centuries of American history are at least as distinct as three generations in any race.

The Typical American.

Again, the typical American character of the seventeenth century differed from that of the eighteenth, and that of the eighteenth from that of the nineteenth, as distinctly as the historical limits of these centuries differed one from the other. In the seventeenth century the typical American, a man of English-speaking race, seemed to himself an immigrant hardly at home in the remote regions where his exiled life was to be passed. In the eighteenth century the typical American, still English at heart, was so far in descent from the immigration that almost unawares his personal ties with the mother country had been broken. In the nineteenth century the typical American, politically as well as personally independent of the old world, and English only so far as the traditions inseparable from ancestral law and language must keep him so, has often felt or fancied himself less at one with contemporary Englishmen than with Europeans of other and essentially foreign blood.

The Ideals of Right and of Rights.

Yet we Americans are English-speaking still; the ideals which underlie our conscious life must always be the ideals which underlie the conscious life of the mother country. Morally and religiously these ideals are immortally consecrated in King James's version of the Bible; legally and politically they are grouped in the Common Law of England. Morally, these ideals are comprised in a profound conviction that we are bound to do

right; legally they may be summarized in the statement that we are bound to maintain our rights. But the rights contemplated by our ancestral law are not vague things, which people imagine, on general principles, that they ought to have; they are privileges and practices which custom and experience have proved favorable to the welfare of people like ourselves.

The Three Centuries of Literature in America.

Recurring to our division of native Americans into the three types which correspond with the three centuries of American history, we perceive that only the last, the Americans of the nineteenth century, have produced literature of any importance. The greater part of our study must consequently concern the century lately at an end. For all that, the two earlier centuries were not sterile; rather indeed the amount of native American writing which each produced is surprising. What is more, American writings of the eighteenth century differed from those of the seventeenth quite as distinctly as did American history or American character. Of both centuries, meanwhile, two things are true: neither in itself presents much literary variety, and most of what was published in each has already been forgotten. Our task, accordingly, is to glance at the literary history of America during the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, and to study that literary history during the past hundred years.

Taking each century in turn, we may conveniently begin by reminding ourselves briefly of what it contributed to the history and to the literature of England. With this in mind we may better understand a similar but more minute study of America during each of the three periods in question. When we come to the last and most important of these, the nineteenth century, we may find ourselves a

little troubled by the fact that so much of it is almost contemporary with ourselves. Contemporary life is never quite ripe for history; facts cannot at once range themselves in true perspective; and when these facts are living men and women, there is a touch of inhumanity in writing of them as if we had already had the misfortune to lose them. Yet write of them we must, with what approach to certainty contemporary judgment may make, in order that by carrying our record through the year 1900 we may try to discern what America has so far contributed to the literature of our ancestral English language.

BOOK I

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BOOK I

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

I

ENGLISH HISTORY FROM 1600 TO 1700

REFERENCES

Gardiner, Chapters xxx–xliii. A list of books for further study of this period is given by Gardiner, p. 577; for our purposes, however, Gardiner's own chapters are sufficient.

The Sovereigns.

IN 1600 the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603)* was drawing to its close. After her came the pragmatic Scotchman, James I (1603–1625). After him came Charles I (1625–1649), whose tragic fate has combined with the charm of his portraits to make him at least a pathetically romantic hero. Then came Cromwell (1649–1658), as sternly sovereign in his fleeting Commonwealth as ever king was in monarchy. Then came Charles II (1660–1685) with all the license of the Restoration; then James II (1685–1689), displaced by the revolution which broke out in 1688; finally (1689–1702) came the Dutch Prince of Orange with his English Queen, Mary (1689–1694). Seven sovereigns in all we find, if we count William and Mary together; and of these only six were royal. Of the six royalties, four were Stuarts, who came in the

* The dates after the names of sovereigns indicate the limits not of their lives but of their reigns.

middle of the list; and the Stuart dynasty was broken
Cromwell. midway by Cromwell, the one English sovereign not royal.

Literally, then, Cromwell is the central figure of English history during the seventeenth century. Love him or hate him, reverence or detest his memory, one fact you must grant: never before in English history had men seen dominant the type of which he is the great representative; never since his time have they again seen that dominant type, now vanished with the world which brought it forth, —the type of the dominant Puritan.

The Puritan character, of course, is too permanently English to be confined to any single period of English history. In the seventeenth century, however, Puritanism for a while acquired the unique importance of national dominance, which it proved politically unable to maintain
Puritanism. beyond the lifetime of its chief exponent. A religious system, one generally thinks it; and rightly, for it was profoundly actuated by conscious religious motives, and by passionate devotion to that system of Christian theology which is known as Calvinism. A political movement, too, it often seems; and rightly, for never in the course of English history have native Englishmen so striven to alter the form and the course of constitutional development. In such a study as ours it has both aspects; the dominance of Puritanism may best be thought of as the period when for a little while the moral and religious ideals which underlie our language were uppermost, when for once the actuating impulse of authority was rather that the will of God should be done on earth than that any custom—however fortified and confirmed by the experience formulated in the Common Law—should for its own sake be maintained.

That the will of God should be done, on earth as it is in

Heaven, no good man will ever deny. What the will of God is, on the other hand, when directly concerned with the matters of this world, even good Englishmen cannot always agree. Among the Puritans themselves there was plenty of dissension, but one thing seems fairly sure,—no good Puritan questioned the truth of Calvinism. To understand Puritanism, in England and in America alike, we must therefore remind ourselves of what Calvinistic theology taught.

In the beginning, the Puritans held, God created man, responsible to Him, with perfect freedom of will. Adam, in the fall, exerted his will in opposition to the will of God; thereby Adam and all his posterity merited eternal punishment. As a mark of that punishment they lost the power of exerting their will in harmony with the will of God, without losing their hereditary responsibility to Him. But God, in His infinite mercy, was pleased to mitigate His justice. Through the mediation of Christ, certain human beings, chosen at God's pleasure, might be relieved of the just penalty of sin, and received into everlasting salvation. These were the elect; none others could be saved, nor could any acts of the elect impair their salvation. Now, there were no outward and visible marks by which the elect might be known; there was a fair chance that any human being to whom the gospel was brought might be of the number. The thing which most vitally concerned every man was accordingly to discover whether he were elect, and so free from the just penalty of sin. The test of election was ability to exert the will in true harmony with the will of God; whoever could willingly do right had a fair ground for hope that he should be saved. But even the elect were infected with the hereditary sin of humanity;

Calvinism.

and, besides, no wile of the Devil was more frequent than that which deceived men into believing themselves regenerated when in truth they were not. The task of assuring one's self of election could end only with life,—a life of passionate aspirations, ecstatic enthusiasms, profound discouragements. Above all, men must never forget that the true will of God was revealed, directly or by implication, only and wholly in Scripture; incessant study of Scripture was the sole means by which any man could assure himself that his will was really exerting itself, through the mediatory power of Christ, in true harmony with the will of God.

Calvinism Akin to Evolution.

Calvinism this creed is commonly called, in memory of John Calvin (1509–1564), the French reformer, who has been its chief modern exponent; but perhaps we might better call it the system of Saint Augustine. Both Augustine and Calvin are remembered chiefly, perhaps wholly, as theologians, and seem intangibly remote from the workaday life of this age, whose most characteristic energies are devoted to scientific research. Yet, strangely enough, the conceptions which underlie the most popular scientific philosophy of our own time have much in common with those which actuated both Augustine and Calvin. Earthly life, the modern evolutionists hold, consists in a struggle for existence wherein only the fittest can survive. In the days when Calvin pondered on the eternities, and still more in those tragic days of toppling empire when Augustine strove to imprison divine truth within the limits of earthly language, science was still to come. But what Augustine and Calvin saw, in the human affairs whence each inferred the systems of Heaven and Hell, was really what the modern evolutionists perceive in every aspect of Nature. Total

depravity is only a theological name for that phase of life which moderns name the struggle for existence; and likewise election is only a theological name for what our newer fashion calls the survival of the fittest.

Now, any struggle is bound to be at its fiercest where the struggling forces are most concentrated. In human affairs, both good and evil struggle hardest where human beings are most densely congregated. Augustine wrote in a world still formally dominated by that imperial power of Rome whose health and strength were gone. Calvin wrote in the populous Europe of the Renaissance, where the whole system of mediæval life was doomed, and where the pressure of economic fact was already forcing the more adventurous spirits of every European race to explore our Western Hemisphere. Noble, too, though we may find the traditions of that merry old England, which was so vital under Queen Elizabeth, which faded under the first two Stuarts, and which vanished in the smoke of the Civil Wars, the plain records, both of history and of literature, show it to have been a dense, wicked old world, whose passions ran high and deep, and whose vices and crimes, big as its brave old virtues, were such as to make the grim dogmas of the Puritans seem to many earnest minds the only explanation of so godless a fact as human life.

Puritan Ideals.

God's will be done on earth, then, the Puritans cried, honestly conceiving this divine will to demand the political dominance of God's elect. The society over which they believed that these elect should make themselves politically dominant had all the complexity which must develop itself during centuries of national and social growth; and this growth, fortified by the unwritten Common Law of England, had taken through the centuries an earthly course at

variance with what the Puritans held to be their divinely sanctioned politics. Towards the end of Cromwell's dominance they tried to mend matters by giving England a written constitution. In many respects this Instrument of Government seems theoretically better than the older system which had grown under the unwritten Common Law, and which since Cromwell's time has developed into the Parliamentary government now controlling the British Empire. The Instrument of Government, however, had a mortal weakness: it was not historically continuous with the past; and this was enough to prevent any historical continuity with the future. The struggle for political existence in England was inevitably fatal to principles and ideals so little rooted in national life as those which the Puritans formulated. So in England, after the momentary irruption of dominant Puritanism, the old Common Law surged back; and it has flowed on to the present day, the stronger if not the nobler of the two ideals of our race.

The Change of National Temper.

The records which remain to us of Elizabethan England, and of the England which finally broke into civil war, seem to concern men of a remote past. Take, for example, the adventurer, Ralegh; the soldier and courtier, Essex; and, a little later, that most chivalrous of autobiographers, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. All three are marked by a big, simple, youthful spontaneity. Take, equally at random, three other names which belong to the years after Cromwell's dominant Puritanism had failed: Samuel Pepys, the diarist; Halifax, the great Trimmer; and John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough. Though by no means contemporary with ourselves, these seem, in comparison with the elder group, almost modern,—old-fash-

ioned men rather than men of an earlier type than those we live with. The contrast is typical. The England which came before Cromwell, the England which we may name "Elizabethan," vanished when Puritan dominance broke for a while the progress of English constitutional law; the England which came afterwards, whatever its merits or its faults, lacked, as England has continued to lack ever since the Restoration, certain traits which we all feel in the old Elizabethan world.

Three Elizabethan Traits.

For our purpose there is hardly anything more important than to realize, if we can, what these Elizabethan traits were, which distinguish the England before Cromwell's time from that which has come after him. Perhaps we shall have done a little to remind ourselves of what Elizabethan England possessed, when we begin to feel how throughout that older time we find three characteristics which in later days are more and more rare,—spontaneity, enthusiasm, and versatility.

II

ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM 1600 TO 1700

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For this chapter, as for the others on English literary history, the general authorities (see p. vii) are sufficient. Whoever wishes more about this period may consult George Saintsbury's *History of Elizabethan Literature*, London: Macmillan, 1887, and A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne*, 3 vols., London: Macmillan, 1899.

The Three Periods.

THE social history of seventeenth-century England groups itself in three parts: that which preceded the dominant Puritanism of the Commonwealth; the dominant Puritanism itself; and what came after. All three of these phases of English life found expression in literature. Between 1600 and 1605 appeared plays by Dekker, Ben Jonson, John Lyly, Shakspere, Marston, Middleton, Heywood, and Chapman; Florio's translation of Montaigne; Campion's *Art of English Poetry;* and, among many other lesser works, the last volume of Hakluyt's *Voyages.* Between 1648 and 1652 appeared works by Fuller, Herrick, Lovelace, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, Bunyan, Izaak Walton, and George Herbert. Finally, between 1695 and 1700 appeared plays by Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh; and works of one sort or another by Bentley, Defoe, Evelyn, Lord Shaftesbury, and Dryden; not to speak of Tate and Brady's version of the Psalms. These random lists will suggest the outline of the literary history we need to keep in mind.

The beginning of the century marked the height of Elizabethan literature, in which the central figure is Shakspere. Among the men who were writing in the middle of the century, men in whom the Elizabethan spirit was no longer strong, one rose almost as superior to the rest as Shakspere had been fifty years before. That one, of course, is Milton (1608–1674). In the last five years of the century, there was another group, as different from either of the others as were the periwigs of Marlborough from the jewelled caps of Sir Walter Ralegh; and in this last group, as in the others, one figure emerges from the rest. Here that figure is John Dryden (1631–1700), the first great maker of heroic couplets, and the first masterly writer of such English prose as we now feel to be modern. It is worth our while to glance in turn at each of these literary periods,—the periods of Shakspere, of Milton, and of Dryden.

The Period of Shakspere.

Elizabethan literature, in which Shakspere now appears supreme, is at once the first, and in many respects the greatest, of the schools or periods of letters which constitute modern English literature. Marked throughout by spontaneity, enthusiasm, and versatility, this period is clearly marked as well by the fact that it brought to final excellence two kinds of poetry,—the lyric, and a little later the dramatic. In thinking of Elizabethan literature, one is accordingly apt to forget that it includes noble prose as well. Yet no reader of English can long forget that to this same period belong the scientific work and the later essays of Bacon. It was within the first fifteen years of the seventeenth century, too, that Ralegh, in the Tower, was writing his *History of the World;* and that various masterly translations were accompanying the growth of that

final masterpiece of translation, the English Bible of 1611. Meanwhile there were minor phases of literature: the name of Hakluyt, the collector of so many records of exploration, is still familiar; so is that of Richard Hooker, whose *Ecclesiastical Polity* remains the chief monument of religious controversy in the reign of Elizabeth. Poetry was first, then, and supreme, but there was sonorous and thoughtful prose in philosophy and history alike; much matter of contemporary chronicle, such as Hakluyt's *Voyages;* and much controversial writing.

Throughout this literature there is one trait which the lapse of three centuries has tended to obscure. This is a sort of pristine alertness of mind, evident in innumerable details of Elizabethan style. One may best detect it, perhaps, by committing to memory random passages from Elizabethan plays. If the trait occurred only in the work of Shakspere, one might deem it a mere fresh miracle of his genius; but it occurs everywhere. Such literature as the Elizabethan world has left us bears witness throughout that the public for which it was made was quick of wit, and eager to enjoy a wide variety of literary effects.

The Period of Milton.

By the middle of the century, this trait had begun to fade out of English letters. Our brief list of mid-century publications revealed Milton, not as the chief of a school, but rather as the one great figure in a group of fastidiously careful minor poets and elaborate makers of overwrought rhetorical prose, often splendid but never simple. Fuller, Taylor, and Walton fairly typify seventeenth-century prose; to complete our impression of it we might glance at Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), and at Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1642). One term by which we may characterize this mid-century Eng-

lish literature, to distinguish it from what came before, is the term "deliberate." Mysteriously but certainly the spontaneity and versatility of Elizabethan days had disappeared. The literature of Cromwell's England was as different from that of Elizabeth's as Cromwell was from Walter Ralegh. The names of Shakspere and Milton tell the story.

The Period of Dryden.

The name of Dryden is as different from that of Milton as Milton's is from Shakspere's. Though Dryden's *Astræa Redux* was published in 1660, seven years before *Paradise Lost*, Dryden died in 1700 amid a literature whose poetry had cooled into something like the rational form which deadened it throughout the century to come, and whose drama had for forty years been revealing new phases of decadence. But if poetry and the drama were for the moment sleeping, there were other kinds of English thought, if not of English feeling, which were full of life. Boyle (1627–1691) had done his work in chemistry; Newton (1642–1727) had created a whole realm of physical science; Locke (1632–1704) had produced his epoch-making *Essay concerning Humane Understanding* (1690); and, to go no further, the works of Sir William Temple (1628–1699) and the critical essays of Dryden himself had given English prose almost its final form.

The Change of National Temper.

In literature, just as in history, we find, the seventeenth century reveals three distinct English epochs, each different from the others and all together involving such changes in the national temperament as to make the England of Dryden almost as foreign to that of Shakspere as the temper of King William III was to Queen Elizabeth's. Like Elizabethan England, Elizabethan literature seems different from anything which we can

now know in the flesh. One can hardly imagine feeling quite at home in the Mermaid Tavern with Beaumont and Ben Jonson and the rest; but in modern London, or at least in the London of thirty years ago, one might sometimes feel that a few steps around a grimy corner should still lead to some coffee-house, where glorious John Dryden could be found sitting in robust, old-fashioned dictatorship over the laws of the language in which we ourselves think and speak and feel. For Dryden's England is not yet quite dead and gone. But dead and gone, or at least vanished from this earth, in Dryden's time almost as surely as in ours, was the spontaneous, enthusiastic, and versatile old England of Elizabeth.

History and literature alike, in short, show us an England of the seventeenth century wherein the great central convulsion of dominant Puritanism fatally destroyed a youthful world, and gave us in its place a more deliberate, permanently different new one.

III

AMERICAN HISTORY FROM 1600 TO 1700

References

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Special Works: The authorities mentioned in the brief bibliographies at the beginnings of chapters in the books mentioned above, and, for minute study, the works referred to in the larger bibliographies named below.

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It was in the first quarter of this seventeenth century that the American colonies were finally established. The first lasting settlement in Virginia was made in the spring of 1607; the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth towards the end of 1620; Boston was founded less than ten years later; and from 1636 dates the oldest of native American corporations, that of Harvard College. At the latest of these dates, which are less than a full generation apart, the tragic reign of Charles I was not half finished; at the earliest, Queen Elizabeth had lain less than five years in Westminster Abbey. **Colonization.**

From these facts may be inferred another, which has been comparatively neglected: every leading man among the first settlers both of Plymouth and of Massachusetts Bay was born under Queen Elizabeth herself. William Bradford of Plymouth, for example, was born in 1590,

The First American Colonists of Elizabethan Birth.

the year when Spenser published the first books of the *Faerie Queene;* and Edward Winslow was born in 1595, when Shakspere had published only *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece.* Thomas Dudley is said to have been born in 1576, some ten years before the execution of Mary Stuart. John Winthrop was born in 1588, the year of the Invincible Armada. John Cotton was born in 1585, the year before Sir Philip Sidney was killed, when, for aught we know, Shakspere had not yet emerged from Stratford, and when surely John Foxe (1516–1587), the martyrologist, was still alive. Thomas Hooker was born only a year later, in 1586. Richard Mather was only ten years younger, born in the year when Ben Jonson's first play is said to have been acted, when Ralegh published his *Discovery of Guiana,* and Spenser the last three books of his *Faerie Queene.* Roger Williams was born in 1600, the year which gave us the first quartos of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Much Ado About Nothing.* And what is thus true of New England is truer still of Virginia, founded half a generation earlier. Though the sovereigns to whom both northern and southern colonies owed their first allegiance were Stuarts, all the founders of these colonies were of true Elizabethan birth.

They were not, to be sure, quite the kind of Elizabethans who expressed themselves in poetry. The single work produced in America which by any stretch of language may be held a contribution to Elizabethan letters is a portion of George Sandys' translation of Ovid made during his sojourn in Virginia between 1621 and 1624. In general, the settlers of Virginia were of the adventurous type which expresses itself far more in action than in words; while

the settlers of New England were too much devoted to the affairs of another world than this to have time, even if they had had taste, for devotion to any form of fine art. Yet for all their mutual detestation, Puritans and poets alike had the spontaneity of temper, the enthusiasm of purpose, and the versatility of power which marked Elizabethan England.

Broadly speaking, all our northern colonies developed from those planted in Massachusetts, and all our southern from that planted in Virginia. The type of character which planted itself on the shores of Massachusetts Bay displayed from the beginning a marked power of assimilating whatever came within its influence. An equal power of assimilation marked the less austere type which first planted itself on the James River. North and South alike, then, may broadly be regarded as regions finally settled by native Elizabethan Englishmen, whose traits proved strong enough to impress themselves on posterity and to resist the immigrant influences of other traditions than their own.

Dominant Puritanism Traditional in New England.

Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were both settled by devout Calvinists. Both colonies were governed from the beginning by written charters, things which, except for Cromwell's Instrument of Government, remain foreign to the political experience of native Englishmen, but which are pretty clearly the prototypes of those written constitutions under which the United States have grown and prospered. In both colonies, too, the ideals of dominant Puritanism prevailed from the beginning, more than half a generation before Cromwell dominated English history. In England, dominant Puritanism was transitory,—fatally unable to maintain itself among the complex

traditions which compose the historical continuity of the old world. In New England, on the other hand, there was no historical continuity, no tradition, no political and social complexity, to check its growth. In England the Civil Wars came; then the Commonwealth; then the Protectorate; then the Restoration. In the history of New England we find no epoch-making facts to correspond with these, no irruption of political ideals strange to the founders of our American Commonwealth, nor any essential change of dominant ideals, until the seventeenth century was over. What might have happened except for the Revolution of 1688, no one can say; but that revolution substantially confirmed the traditions of the New England fathers.

Throughout the seventeenth century, meanwhile, a fact had been developing itself on the American continent which was perhaps more significant to the future of New England than any in the history of the mother country. Before 1610 the French had finally established themselves in the regions now known as Nova Scotia, and from that time French power was steadily extending itself to the northward and westward of the English colonies. This French domination of Canada and of the West meant the planting and the growth there of moral and political ideals utterly foreign to those English ideals which have finally

The French in Canada.

come to characterize our people. The ideal for which the French power stood in religion and in politics alike was, in a word, the ideal of authority,—of a centralized earthly power which, so far as it reached, should absolutely control human thought and conduct.

Divine authority, of course, New England always recognized; but this it found expressed not in an established hierarchy, but in the written words of an inspired Bible. Temporal authority, too, New England recognized; but temporal authority secured by written charters, and so limited that it could never violate the traditional liberties of Englishmen. So the conflict between France and England in the New World was really a conflict between two incompatible systems of political principles,—Continental absolutism and the Common Law of England. Not until well into the eighteenth century, however, did France and England come to their death-grapple in America. In the seventeenth century, or at least until the last ten years of it, there was little more warfare in New England than the struggles of the Indians against the invading race which has long ago swept them away.

The Seventeenth Century in New England.

The history of seventeenth-century New England, in brief, is that of a dominant Puritanism, twenty years older than Cromwell's and surviving his by forty years more. Amid the expanding life of a still unexplored continent, Puritanism was disturbed by no such environment as impeded and fatally checked it in England. Rather, the only external fact which affected New England Puritanism at all, was one which strengthened it,—the threatening growth near by of a system as foreign to every phase of English thought as it was to Puritanism itself.

The result may best be understood by comparing some

historical records of New England during the hundred years now in question. The earliest history of Plymouth is that of Governor Bradford, sometimes miscalled the "Log of the Mayflower"; the earliest history of Massachusetts is that of Governor Winthrop. Winthrop, born in 1588, died in 1649; Bradford, born in 1590, died in 1657. Both were born under Queen Elizabeth; both emigrated before English Puritanism was dominant; and neither survived to see the Restoration. Clearly, the state of life and feeling which they record belongs to the first period of the seventeenth century,—the period when mature men were still of Elizabethan birth. In 1652, three years after Winthrop died and five years before the death of Bradford, Samuel Sewall was born in England. In 1661, four years after Bradford's death, he was brought to Massachusetts, where he lived all his life, becoming Chief Justice of the Superior Court. From 1674 to 1729 he kept his diary. Sewall's life, passed chiefly in Massachusetts, was contemporary with the English literature between Walton's *Complete Angler* and Pope's *Dunciad.* Both Winthrop and Bradford, on the other hand, were born before Shakspere was certainly known as a popular playwright. Yet comparison of Bradford's temper or Winthrop's with Sewall's will show so many more points of resemblance than of difference that it is hard to realize how when Sewall began his diary—not to speak of when

Samuel Sewall.

Sewall's Diary.

he finished it—the generation to which Winthrop and Bradford belonged was almost extinct. The three books impress one as virtually contemporary.

The Seventeenth Century in England.

How different this social pause was from the social progress of seventeenth-century England may be felt by similarly comparing two familiar English records of the period. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1582–1648) was almost exactly contemporary with Winthrop; his autobiography, written in his last years, is among the most characteristic social records in our language. Fifteen years before Lord Herbert's death, and ten before he began his autobiography, Samuel Pepys was born, whose celebrated diary runs from 1660 to 1669. Pepys stopped writing five years before Sewall began, and so far as age goes he might personally have known Lord Herbert. Yet the whole temper of Herbert is so remote from that of Pepys as to make their writing seem of different epochs.

Americans of 1700 retained Elizabethan Traits.

Almost any similar comparison will tell the same story. Compare, for example, your impressions of Ralegh and of Marlborough; compare Bacon with Newton, or Elizabeth with William III. Then name to yourself some of the worthies who are remembered from seventeenth-century America. Bradford and Winthrop we have named already; Winslow and Dudley, too. Add to them Standish, Endicott, Roger Williams, and John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians; John Cotton and Richard Mather; Increase Mather, son of the one and son-in-law of the other; Cotton Mather, who combined the blood of the two immigrant ministers; Sir William Phips; and Sewall, who with Stoughton and the rest sat in judgment on Salem witchcraft. You can hardly help admitting that, though the type of character in America could not remain quite

stationary, the change between the earlier years of the seventeenth century and its close was surprisingly less marked than was the change in England. A little thought will show what this means. Although the type of character which planted itself in New England during the first quarter of the seventeenth century was very Puritan and therefore, from the point of view of its contemporary English literature, very eccentric, it was truly an Elizabethan type. One conclusion seems clear: the native Yankees of 1700 were incalculably nearer their Elizabethan ancestors than were their contemporaries born in the mother country.

National Inexperience of America.

In this fact we come to a consideration worth pondering. Such historical convulsions as those which declared themselves in the England of the seventeenth century result from the struggle of social and political forces in densely populated regions. Such slow social development as marks the seventeenth century in New England is possible only under conditions where the pressure of external fact, social, political, and economic, is relaxed. Such changes as the course of history brought to seventeenth-century England are changes which must result to individuals just as much as to nations themselves from something which, for want of a more exact word, we may call experience. Such lack of change as marks the America of the seventeenth century indicates the absence of this. Yet even in the America of the seventeenth century a true nation, the nation of which we are a part, was growing towards maturity. Though the phrase seem paradoxical, it is surely true that our national life in its beginnings was something hardly paralleled in other history,—a century of national inexperience.

IV

LITERATURE IN AMERICA FROM 1600 TO 1700

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AN instructive impression of the character of literature in America during the seventeenth century may be derived from Mr. Whitcomb's *Chronological Outlines* (pages 2–48). Speaking roughly, we may say that out of about two hundred and fifteen titles which he records, one hundred and ten are religious works, of which all but one were produced in New England. Next comes history, beginning with Captain John Smith's *True Relation*, 1608, which has no more right to be included in American literature than would a book written in our own time by any foreign writer. Of these historical titles there are fifty-seven, of which thirty-seven belong to New England; the others, including the separate works of Captain John Smith, come either from Virginia or from the middle colonies. Twenty of Mr. Whitcomb's titles may be called political; of these only three are not from New England. Of nineteen other titles, including almanacs and scientific works which may best be called miscellaneous, all but two belong in New England. Finally, there are nine titles to which the name literature may properly be applied, if under this head we include not only the poems of Mrs. Bradstreet, but the "Bay Psalm Book," the *Day of Doom*, and the first *New England Primer*. Of these nine books the only one not from New England was the portion of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which GEORGE SANDYS (1577–1644) translated in Virginia.

General Character.

This rough classification shows: (1) that New England produced so large a proportion of American books during the seventeenth century that we hardly need consider the

rest of the colonies; and (2) that of the books written in New England, the greater number were concerned with religious and historical matters. It will be worth while to consider the general traits of these two classes of books before we pass on to three of the nine works which may be called literature.

Religious Writings.

The religious writing, best represented by the works of Cotton Mather, who is the subject of our next chapter, includes also such works as those of THOMAS HOOKER (about 1586–1647), of Cambridge and later of Hartford, of THOMAS SHEPARD (1605–1649), who was Hooker's successor at Cambridge, and of JOHN COTTON (1585–1652) of Boston. Men like these, deeply learned in the Bible and books about the Bible, in the Greek and Latin classics as well, but very slightly influenced by contemporary Elizabethan writings, had enormous influence. Their words, preached or written, weighed only a little less than the Word of God itself. Their writings, mainly sermons and controversial pamphlets, are grim, unsparing applications of Calvinistic teaching to public affairs and to the smallest concerns of private life. These works have little beauty of style; in plan they often seem hardly more than masses of Bible texts put together with a thin thread of comment. But, although disdainful of grace, these religious writings of seventeenth-century New England are heroically earnest, and occasionally they melt into a sombre tenderness of phrase which is far from unlovely.

The historical writing includes not only the two famous histories of the period, the annals *Of Plymouth Plantation* by Governor WILLIAM BRADFORD (1590–1657) of the Plymouth Colony and the *History of New England* by

Governor JOHN WINTHROP (1588–1649), but such minor works as *New England's Memorial*, 1669, by NATHANIEL MORTON (1613–1685); WILLIAM WOOD'S *New England's Prospect*, 1634; the so-called *Mourt's Relation*, 1622, probably by Governor BRADFORD and EDWARD WINSLOW (1595–1655); and Captain EDWARD JOHNSON'S *Wonder-working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England*, 1645. This last title is significant: history in America during this seventeenth century, whether a private diary, or the history of a war, or whatever else, was the devout record of the hand of God guiding the affairs of human beings. Again, this history was not of the sort which calmly views events in the perspective of time, but it was written by men who when they took up the pen to write of one battle kept within their reach the sword which they might presently need for the next. Much of their work is accordingly in the form of diaries and annals. If we remember that it was very devout and very personal, fragmentary in form, usually uncouth in style, but almost always sternly direct and sometimes unwittingly memorable in phrasing, we shall recognize its most important traits.

Historical Writings.

Contrasting these impressions with our summary of English literature during this seventeenth century,—the century of Shakspere, of Milton, and of Dryden,—it seems at first as if America produced no literature at all. Looking more carefully, however, we see that in Elizabethan England along with supreme poetry there was also both lasting prose, like that of Hooker, of Bacon, and of Ralegh, and such minor prose records and annals as are typified by Hakluyt's *Voyages*, together with a good deal of now forgotten religious writing. In English litera-

ture, these last sorts of writing are unimportant; they were generally produced not by men of letters, but either by men of action or by earnest, uninspired men of God. Now the men who founded the colonies of Virginia and of New England were on the one hand men of action, and on the other, men of God. It is precisely such matter as Elizabethan Englishmen left in books now remembered only as material for history that the fathers of America produced throughout the first century of our national inexperience.

"Bay Psalm Book."

If we seek in New England for traces of pure literature during the seventeenth century, indeed, we shall discover hardly anything before the "Bay Psalm Book," produced under the supervision of Richard Mather, Thomas Welde, and John Eliot, in 1640. An extract from the preface and from the Nineteenth Psalm will give a sufficient taste of its quality:—

"If therefore the verses are not alwayes so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that God's Altar needs not our pollishings: Ex. 20. for wee have respected rather a plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase, and soe have attended Conscience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather than poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre; that soe we may sing in Sion the Lords songs of prayse according to his owne will; untill hee take us from hence, and wipe away all our teares, & bid us enter into our masters ioye to sing eternall Halleluiahs."

. . . . . .

"PSALME XIX

To the chiefe Musician a psalme of David

The heavens doe declare
the majesty of God;

also the firmament shews forth
his handy-work abroad.
2 Day speaks to day, knowledge
night hath to night declar'd.
3 There neither speach nor language is,
where their voyce is not heard.
4 Through all the earth their line
is gone forth, & unto
the utmost end of all the world,
their speaches reach also:
A Tabernacle hee
in them pitcht for the Sun.
5 Who Bridegroom like from's chamber goes
glad Giants-race to run.
6 From heavens utmost end,
his course and compassing;
to ends of it, & from the heat
thereof is hid nothing."

The King James version of the same psalm, published less than thirty years before, was perfectly familiar to the men who hammered out this barbarous imitation of a metre similarly used by the Earl of Surrey in the time of Henry VIII. This fact should give a sufficient idea of the literary spirit which controlled the Puritan fathers.

Ward's Simple Cobbler of Aggawam.

The next monument of literature in America is noteworthy only because it was written there, and not in England. In 1647, the Reverend NATHANIEL WARD of Agawam (now Ipswich), Massachusetts, published his *Simple Cobbler of Aggawam*, who, as he declared on the title-page, was "willing to help 'mend his Native Country, lamentably tattered, both in the upper-Leather and Sole, with all the honest stitches he can take." The book is a violent attack upon the relaxed attitude of the church in tolerating shades of belief, upon frivolity in dress and manners, and upon

the "wearisome wars," the Civil Wars in England, which he desires may be brought to a "comely, brotherly, seasonable, and reasonable cessation."

Wigglesworth's Day of Doom.

Fifteen years later, in 1662, MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH (1631–1715), then minister of Malden, Massachusetts, published his *Day of Doom, or, A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment*, which retained its influence in New England for about a century. Of this the "Plea of the Infants" is example enough:

"If for our own transgression,
or disobedience,
We here did stand at thy left hand
just were the Recompence:
But Adam's guilt our souls hath spilt,
his fault is charg'd on us:
And that alone hath overthrown,
and utterly undone us.

"Not we, but he ate of the Tree,
whose fruit was interdicted;
Yet on us all of his sad Fall,
the punishment's inflicted.
How could we sin that had not been
or how is his sin our
Without consent which to prevent,
we never had a pow'r?"

And so on for several stanzas, after which the Lord pronounces this judgment:

"You sinners are, and such a share
as sinners may expect,
Such you shall have; for I do save
none but my own Elect.

Yet to compare your sin with their
who lived a longer time,
I do confess yours is much less,
though every sin's a crime.

"A crime it is, therefore in bliss
you may not hope to dwell;
But unto you I shall allow
the easiest room in Hell.
The glorious King thus answering,
they cease and plead no longer:
Their Consciences must needs confess
his reasons are the stronger."

Mrs. Bradstreet.

Such work is more characteristic of seventeenth-century America than is the verse of Mrs. ANNE BRADSTREET (1612 or 1613–1672), daughter of the elder Governor Dudley. A few verses from a volume entitled *Several Poems Compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of Delight*, which was published in 1678, six years after Mrs. Bradstreet's death, will show her at her best:

"When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
And then the earth (though old) still clad in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,
Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If Winter come, and greenness then do fade,
A Spring returns, and they more youthful made;
But man grows old, lies down, remains where once he's laid.

. . . . . .

"O Time, the fatal wrack of mortal things,
That draws oblivion's curtains over kings,
Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not,
Their names without a record are forgot,
Their parts, their ports, their pomp's all laid in th' dust,
Nor wit nor gold, nor buildings 'scape time's rust;
But he whose name is grav'd in the white stone
Shall last and shine when all of these are gone."

Mrs. Bradstreet's family, as the career of her brother, Governor Joseph Dudley, indicates, kept in closer touch with England than was common in America; and besides she was clearly a person of what would nowadays be called culture. Partly for these reasons her work seems neither individual nor local. In seventeenth-century New England, indeed, she stands alone, without forerunners or followers; and if you compare her poetry with that of the old country, you will find it very like such then antiquated work as the *Nosce Teipsum* of Sir John Davies, published in 1599, the year which gave us the final version of *Romeo and Juliet*. In its own day, without much doubt, the little pure literature of seventeenth-century New England was already archaic.

Summary.

Apart from this, New England produced only annals, records, and, far more characteristically, writings of the class which may be grouped broadly under theology. Just as our glance at the history of seventeenth-century America revealed no central convulsions like the Commonwealth, dividing an old epoch from a new, so our glance at the American publications of this century reveals no central figure like Milton's standing between the old Elizabethan world which clustered about Shakspere, and the new, almost modern, school of letters which gathered about Dryden.

The Mathers.

A fact perhaps more characteristic of seventeenth-century America than any publication was the foundation in 1636 of Harvard College, intended to preserve for posterity that learned ministry which was the distinguishing glory of the immigrant Puritans. In the history of Harvard College during the seventeenth century the most conspicuous individuals were probably President Increase

Mather (1639–1723) and his son Cotton Mather (1663–1728). The younger of these wrote very voluminously. During forty-two years of literary activity, however, he never changed either his style or his temper. His work falls chiefly though not wholly under the two heads of religion and history, which with him were so far from distinct that it is often hard to say under which a given work or passage should be grouped. These heads are the same which we have seen to include most American writings of the seventeenth century. Cotton Mather's work, in short, is so thoroughly typical of American publications throughout his time that a little study of him will best define for us what seventeenth-century writing in America really was.

V

COTTON MATHER

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Cotton Mather (1663–1728) was the son of Increase Mather, a minister already eminent, and the grandson of John Cotton and of Richard Mather, two highly distinguished ministers of the immigration. In 1678 he took his degree at Harvard College. Only three years later, in 1681, he became associated with his father as minister of the Second Church in Boston, where he preached all his life.

Life.

To understand both his personal history and his literary work, we must never forget that the Puritan fathers had believed New England charged with a divine mission to show the world what human society might be when governed by constant devotion to the revealed law of God. This is nowhere better stated than by Cotton Mather himself in the general introduction to his *Magnalia:*

"In short, the *First Age* was the *Golden Age:* To return unto *That*, will make a Man a *Protestant*, and I may add, a *Puritan*. 'T is possible, that our Lord Jesus Christ carried some Thousands of *Reformers* into the Retirement of an *American Desert*, on purpose, that with an opportunity granted unto many of his Faithful Servants, to enjoy the precious *Liberty* of their *Ministry*, tho' in the midst of many *Temptations* all their days, He might there *To* them first, and then *By* them, give a *Specimen* of many good Things, which he would have His Churches elsewhere aspire and arise unto: And *This* being done, He knows whether there be not *All Done*, that *New England* was planted for; and whether the Plantation may not, soon after this, *Come to Nothing*."

In the course of seventy years, the political power of ministers had tended on the whole to wane. Increase and Cotton Mather, able and earnest men, opposed with all their hearts every innovating tendency. Thus, with many other ministers, they were forced into active support of the witch-trials at Salem in 1692. The collapse of these trials, in spite of ministerial effort, may be said to mark the end of theocracy in New England. Nine years later, in 1701, the orthodox party in the church had another blow. Increase Mather, after sixteen years as President of Harvard College, was finally displaced by a divine of more liberal tendencies. This really ended the public career of both father and son. In the public life of New England, as in that of the mother country, we may say, the ideal of the Common Law finally supplanted the theocratic ideal of the Puritans, and at the oldest of New England seminaries the ideal of Protestantism finally vanquished that of priesthood.

The End of Theocracy in New England.

Cotton Mather lived on until 1728, preaching, writing numberless books, and doing much good scientific work; among other things, he was the first person in the English-

speaking world to practise inoculation for small-pox. Untiringly busy, hoping against hope for well on to thirty years, he died at last with the word *Fructuosus* * on his lips as a last counsel to his son. Undoubtedly he was eccentric and fantastic, so stubborn, too, that those who love progress have been apt to think him almost as bad as he was queer. For all his personal eccentricity, however, he seems on the whole the most complete type of the oldest-fashioned divine of New England. He was born in Boston and educated at Harvard College; he lived in Boston all his life, never straying a hundred miles away. Whatever else his life and work mean, they cannot help expressing what human existence taught the most intellectually active of seventeenth-century Yankees.

Here, of course, we are concerned with him only as a man of letters. His literary activity was prodigious. Sibley's *Harvard Graduates* records some four hundred titles of his actual publications; besides this, he wrote an unpublished treatise on medicine which would fill a folio volume; and his unpublished *Biblia Americana*—an exhaustive commentary on the whole Bible—would fill two or three folios more. He also left behind him many sermons, not to speak of letters and diaries, which have never seen print. And, at the same time, he was one of the busiest ministers, one of the most insatiable scholars and readers, and one of the most active politicians whom America has ever known.

Mather's Work.

To discuss in detail such an outpour is impracticable; but Cotton Mather's most celebrated book, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, which was made towards the middle of his life

* Fruitful.

and which includes reprints of a number of brief works published earlier, typifies all he did as a man of letters, before or afterwards. It was begun, his diary tells us, in 1693; and although not published until 1702, it was virtually finished in 1697. These dates throw light on what the book really means; they come just between the end of those witchcraft trials which broke the political power of the clergy, and the final defeat of the Mathers in their endeavor to retain the government of Harvard College. Though tradition still holds this endeavor to have been chiefly a matter of personal ambition, whoever comes intimately to know the Mathers must feel that to them the question seemed far otherwise. What both had at heart was a passionate desire that New England should remain true to the cause of the fathers, which both believed indisputably the cause of God. In the years when the *Magnalia* was writing, there seemed a chance that if contemporary New England could awaken to a sense of what pristine New England had been, all might still go well. So the *Magnalia*, though professedly a history, may better be regarded as a passionate controversial tract. Its true motive was to excite so enthusiastic a sympathy with the ideals of the Puritan fathers that, whatever fate might befall the civil government, their ancestral seminary of learning should remain true to its colors.

The Magnalia.

At the time when the *Magnalia* was conceived, the New England colonies were about seventy years old. Broadly speaking, there had flourished in them three generations,—the immigrants, their children, and their grandchildren. The time was come, Cotton Mather thought, when the history of these three generations might be critically examined; if this examination should result in showing that there had lived in New England an unprecedented proportion of men and women and children whose earthly existence had given signs that they were pleasing to God, then his book might go far to prove that the pristine policy of New England had been especially favored of the Lord. For surely the Lord would most gladly plant His chosen ones in places where life was conducted most nearly in accordance with His will.

Its Contents.

Cotton Mather consequently writes in a spirit very different from that of a critical modern historian. In his general narrative, for example, he hardly mentions the Antinomian controversy, and has little to say of such subsequently famous personages as Roger Williams or Mrs. Anne Hutchinson. On the other hand, he details at loving length, first the lives of those governors and magistrates who seemed especial servants of the Lord, from Bradford and Winthrop and Theophilus Eaton to Sir William Phips; and next the lives and spiritual experiences of a great number of the immigrant clergy and of their successors in the pulpit. He recounts the history of Harvard College during its first sixty years; and he lays down with surprising lucidity the orthodox doctrine and discipline of the New England churches. These matters fill five of the seven books into which the *Magnalia* is divided. The last two books portray the reverse of the

picture; one deals with "Remarkable Mercies and Judgments on many particular persons among the people of New England," and the other with "The Wars of the Lord—the Afflictive Disturbances which the Churches of New England have suffered from their various adversaries; and the Wonderful Methods and Mercies, whereby the Churches have been delivered." Full of petty personal anecdote, and frequently revealing not only bigoted prejudice but grotesque superstition, these last two books have been more generally remembered than the rest; but they are by no means the most characteristic.

The prose epic of New England Puritanism, the *Magnalia* has been called, setting forth in heroic mood the principles, the history, and the personal characters of the fathers. The principles, theologic and disciplinary alike, are stated with clearness, dignity, and fervor. The history, though its less welcome phases are often lightly emphasized and its details are hampered by no deep regard for minor accuracy, is set forth with a sincere ardor which makes its temper more instructive than that of many more trustworthy records. And the life-like portraits of the Lord's chosen, though full of quaintly fantastic phrasing and artless pedantry, are often drawn with touches of enthusiastic beauty.

Its Temper.

The last clause of a ponderous sentence from his life of Thomas Shepard, first minister of Cambridge, is far more characteristic of Mather than are many of the oddities commonly thought of when his name is mentioned:—

"As he was a very *Studious* Person, and a very lively Preacher; and one who therefore took great Pains in his *Preparations* for his Publick Labours, which Preparations he would usually finish *on Saturday*, by two a Clock in the Afternoon; with respect whereunto

he once used these Words, *God will curse that Man's Labours, that lumbers up and down in the World all the Week, and then upon Saturday, in the afternoon goes to his Study; whereas God knows, that Time were little enough to pray in and weep in, and get his Heart into a fit Frame for the Duties of the approaching Sabbath;* So the Character of his daily Conversation, was *A Trembling Walk with God.*"

"A trembling walk with God,"—you shall look far for a nobler phrase than that, or for one which should more truly characterize not only Thomas Shepard, but the better life of all the first century of New England, where the pressure of external fact was politically and socially relaxed; where, except with the brute forces of nature, the struggle for existence was less fierce than in almost any other region now remembered.

The *Magnalia* is full of an enthusiasm which, in spite of the pedantic queerness of Mather's style, one grows to feel more and more vital. Amid all its vagaries and oddities, one feels too a trait which even our single extract may perhaps indicate. Again and again, Cotton Mather writes with a rhythmical beauty which recalls the enthusiastic spontaneity of Elizabethan English. And though the *Magnalia* hardly reveals the third characteristic of Elizabethan England, no one can read the facts of Cotton Mather's busy, active life without feeling that this man himself, who wrote with enthusiastic spontaneity, and who in his earthly life was minister, politician, man of science, scholar, and constant organizer of innumerable good works, embodied just that kind of restless versatility which characterized Elizabethan England and which to this day remains characteristic of native Yankees.

Elizabethan Traits in the Magnalia.

For if the lapse of seventy years had not left New Eng-

land unchanged, it had altered life there far less than men have supposed. The *Magnalia* was published two years after Dryden died; yet it groups itself not with such work as Dryden's, but rather with such earlier work as that of Fuller or even of Burton. As a man of letters, Cotton Mather, who died in the reign of George II, had more in common with that generation of his ancestors which was born under the last of the Tudors than with any later kind of native Englishmen.

VI

SUMMARY

Our glance at the literary history of America during the seventeenth century has revealed these facts: in 1630, when Boston was founded, the mature inhabitants of America, like their brethren in England, were native Elizabethans; in 1700 this race had long been in its grave. In densely populated England, meanwhile, historical pressure—social, political, and economic alike—had wrought such changes in the national character as are marked by the contrast between the figures of Elizabeth and of King William III. National experience had altered the dominant type of native Englishmen. In America the absence of any such external pressure had preserved to an incalculable degree the spontaneous, enthusiastic, versatile character of the original immigrants. In literature, seventeenth-century England had expressed itself in at least three great and distinct moods, of which the dominant figures were Shakspere, Milton, and Dryden. Though America had meanwhile produced hardly any pure letters, it had continued, long after Elizabethan temper had faded from the native literature of England, to keep alive with little alteration those minor phases of Elizabethan thought and feeling which had expressed the temper of the ancestral Puritans. In history and in literature alike, the story of seventeenth-century America is a story of unique national inexperience.

BOOK II

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BOOK II

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

I

ENGLISH HISTORY FROM 1700 TO 1800

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The Sovereigns.

WHEN the eighteenth century began, the reign of William III was about as near its close as that of Elizabeth was a hundred years before. In 1702 William was succeeded by Queen Anne. In 1714 George I followed her, founding the dynasty which still holds the throne. George II succeeded him in 1727; and in 1760 came George III, whose reign extended till 1820. The names of these sovereigns instantly suggest certain familiar facts, of which the chief is that during the first half of the century the succession remained somewhat in doubt. It was only in 1745, when the reign of George II was more than half finished, that the last fighting with Stuart pretenders occurred on British soil. Though on British soil, however, this contest was not on English: there has been no actual warfare in England since 1685, when the battle of Sedgmoor suppressed the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion against James II. These obvious facts indicate historical circumstances which have had profound effect on English character.

During the past two centuries the commercial prosperity of England has exceeded that of most other countries. An imperative condition of such prosperity is peace and domestic order. Good business demands a state of life which permits people to devote themselves to their own affairs, trusting politics to those whose office it is to govern. Under such circumstances eighteenth-century Englishmen had small delight in civil wars and disputed successions. Accordingly they displayed increasing confidence in parliamentary government, which could give England what divine right could no longer give it,—prosperous public order. In the course of the eighteenth century, there steadily grew a body of public opinion, at last overwhelming, which tended to the maintenance of established institutions.

The Eighteenth Century in England a Period of Stability.

So this eighteenth century brought to England far less radical changes than those which marked the preceding. Though the interval between the deaths of George III and William of Orange is far longer than that between William's and Queen Elizabeth's, we can feel between the Prince of Orange and his native English successor no such contrast as we felt between William and the last Tudor queen. For all that, the century was not stagnant; and perhaps our simplest way of estimating its progress is by four well-remembered English battles. In 1704 was fought the battle of Blenheim; in 1745, that of Fontenoy; in 1759 Wolfe fell victorious at Quebec; and in 1798 Nelson won the first of his great naval victories—the battle of the Nile.

England and France.

Whatever else these battles have in common, all four were fought against the French,—the one continental power whose coast is in sight of England. Throughout

the century, apparently, the English Channel was apt to be an armed frontier; the geographical isolation of England was tending politically toward that international isolation which until our own time has been so marked. A second fact about these four battles is almost as obvious. However important the questions at issue, people nowadays have generally forgotten what Blenheim and Fontenoy were fought about. The other two battles which we have called to mind, those of Quebec and of the Nile, were fought in the second half of the century; and of these tradition still remembers the objects. The battle of Quebec finally assured the dominance in America of the English Law. The battle of the Nile began to check that French revolutionary power which under the transitory empire of Napoleon once seemed about to conquer the whole civilized world, and which met its final defeat seventeen years later at Waterloo.

The Insularity of England.

The names of Blenheim and the Nile suggest one more fact: each of these battles gave England a national hero. Marlborough we have already glanced at,—a soldier of the closing seventeenth century as well as of the dawning eighteenth, whose career asserted that in the political struggles of continental Europe England could never be left out of account. Nelson, whose name is almost as familiarly associated with the battle of the Nile as with his victorious death at Trafalgar, stood for even more; he embodied not only that dominion of the sea which since his time England has maintained, but also that growing imperial power which was able to withstand and ultimately to check the imperial force of France incarnate in Napoleon. Imperial though Nelson's victories were, however, Nelson himself was almost typically insular. As we compare

Marlborough, the chief English hero of the opening century, with Nelson, the chief English hero of its close, Marlborough seems a European and Nelson an Englishman. This fact implies the whole course of English history in the eighteenth century. Just as the internal history of England tended to a more and more conservative preservation of public order, so her international history tended more and more to make Englishmen a race apart.

Before the century was much more than half done, this insular English race had on its hands something more than the island where its language, its laws, its traditions, and its character had been developed; something more, besides, than those American colonies whose history during their first century we have already traced. As the name of Quebec has already reminded us, the wars with the French had finally resulted in the conquest by the English Law of those American regions which had threatened to make American history that of a ceaseless conflict between English institutions and those of continental Europe. The same years which had brought about the conquest of Canada had also achieved the conquest of that Indian Empire which still makes England potent in Asia. In 1760, when George III came to the throne, imperial England, which included the thirteen colonies of North America, seemed destined to impose its image on the greatest continents of both hemispheres.

Colonial Expansion.

Twenty years later the American Revolution had broken all political union between those regions in the old world and in the new which have steadily been dominated by English Law. That on both sides of the Atlantic the Common Law has been able to survive this shock is per-

haps the most conclusive evidence of vitality in its long and varied history. The Revolution itself we shall consider more closely later: one fact about it we may remark here. Until the Revolution, America, like England, had considered France a traditional enemy. Open warfare with England naturally brought America and France together; without French aid, indeed, our independence could hardly have been established. A very few years consequently awoke among Americans a general sentiment of strong nominal sympathy with the French. At the moment when this declared itself, France was blindly developing that abstract philosophy of human rights which less than twenty years later resulted in the French Revolution. This philosophy was eagerly welcomed in America, where it has been popular ever since. In no way, however, has America evinced its English origin more clearly than by the serenity with which it has forbidden logic to meddle with the substantial maintenance of legal institutions.

The American Revolution: English and French Ideas of Rights.

But our concern now is with England, who found herself, when the French Revolution had done its work, the only uninvaded conservative power of Europe. The conservatism for which she stood, and has stood ever since, is of the kind which defends tradition against the assaults of untested theory. Without ignoring human rights, it maintains that the most precious human rights are those which have proved humanly feasible; abstract ideals of law and government, however admirable on paper, it regards with such suspicion as in daily life practical men feel concerning the vagaries of plausible thinkers who cannot make both ends meet. The conservatism of eighteenth-century England, in short, defended against untested philosophy the ex-

Conservatism of England.

perience embodied in the Common Law; it defended custom, which at worst had proved tolerable, against theory, which had never been put to proof. So in this closing struggle of the eighteenth century, which continued for half a generation after the century ended, external forces combined with internal ones,—with a full century of domestic peace, and the final settlement of the royal succession,—to develop in England that isolated, deliberate, somewhat slow-witted character which foreigners now suppose permanently English.

John Bull.

The typical Englishman of modern caricature is named John Bull. What he looks like is familiar to any reader of the comic papers. There is a deep significance, when we stop to think, in the fact that the costume still attributed to John Bull is virtually that of the English middle classes in 1800. No date better marks the moment when external forces and internal had combined to make typical of England the insular, vigorous, intolerant character embodied in that familiar and portly figure. Whatever else John Bull may be, he is not spontaneous, not enthusiastic, and not versatile.

II

ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM 1700 TO 1800

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The Three Periods.

The English literature of the eighteenth century is very different from that of the century before. The three literary periods of the seventeenth century were dominated by three great figures,—those of Shakspere, of Milton, and of Dryden. While no such eminence as theirs marks the literary history of the century with which we are now concerned, three typical figures of its different periods may conveniently be called to mind,—Addison, Johnson, and Burke. The very mention of these names must instantly define the contrast now worth our attention. The seventeenth century was one of decided literary development, or at least of change. In comparison the eighteenth century was one of marked monotony.

The Period of Queen Anne.

The literature of its beginning is traditionally associated with the name of Queen Anne almost as closely as that of a hundred years before is with the name of Queen Elizabeth. In 1702, when Anne came to the throne, neither Addison, Steele, Swift, Defoe, nor Pope had attained full

reputation; in 1714, when she died, all five had done enough to assure their permanence, and to fix the type of literature for which their names collectively stand. Prose they had brought to that deliberate, balanced, far from passionate form which it was to retain for several generations; poetry they had cooled into that rational heroic couplet which was to survive in America until the last days of Dr. Holmes. They had brought into being meanwhile a new form of publication,—the periodical,—destined to indefinite development. From the time when the first *Tatler* appeared in 1709 to the present day, a considerable part of our lasting literature has been published in periodicals; and periodicals bespeak, before all things else, a permanent and increasing literary public. If any one name can imply all this, it is surely that of the urbane Joseph Addison (1672–1719).

Addison.

In the middle of the century, when the reign of George II was two-thirds over, English literature was producing a good many works which have survived. Between 1748 and 1752, for example, there were published Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, Smollett's *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle*, Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* and a considerable portion of his *Rambler*, Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, and Goldsmith's *Life of Nash*. Sterne's work and Goldsmith's best writing came only a little later; and during these same five years appeared Wesley's *Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, Hume's *Inquiry into the Human Understanding*, and his *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* and *Political Discourses*. The last two names deserve our notice because Wesley's recalls that strenuous

The Mid-Century.

outburst against religious formalism which has bred the most potent body of modern English Dissenters, and Hume's that rational tendency in philosophy which during the eighteenth century was far more characteristic of France than of England. Putting these aside, we may find in the literary record of this mid-century a state of things somewhat different from that which prevailed under Queen Anne. Another considerable form of English literature had come into existence,—the prose novel, whose germs were already evident in the character sketches of the *Spectator*, and in the vivacious incidents of Defoe. Poetry, preserving studied correctness of form, was beginning to tend back toward something more like romantic sentiment; the prose essay had grown heavier and less vital. For the moment the presiding genius of English letters was Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), throughout whose work we can feel that the formalism which under Queen Anne had possessed the grace of freshness was becoming traditional. In conventional good sense his writings, like those which surrounded them, remained vigorous; but their vigor was very unlike the spontaneous, enthusiastic versatility of Elizabethan letters. Johnson.

About twenty-five years later comes a date so memorable to Americans that a glance at its literary record in England can hardly help being suggestive. The year from which our national independence is officially dated came at the height of Burke's powers, and just between Sheridan's *Rivals*, published the year before, and his *School for Scandal*, of the year after. In the record of English publications, 1776 is marked by no important works of pure literature; but in that year Hume died, Jeremy Ben-

tham published his *Fragment on Government*, Gibbon the first volume of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Adam Smith his *Wealth of Nations*, and Thomas Paine his *Common Sense;* the second edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, too, appeared in ten volumes. In 1776, it seems, things literary in England, as well as things political in the British Empire, were taking a somewhat serious turn.

The Close of the Century.

In the last ten years of the century, the years when the French Revolution was at its fiercest, there appeared in England works by Burke and by Mrs. Radcliffe, Boswell's *Johnson*, Cowper's *Homer*, Paine's *Rights of Man*, Rogers's *Pleasures of Memory*, poems by Burns, two or three books by Hannah More, the first poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, and Landor, Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, Lewis's *Monk*, Miss Burney's *Camilla*, Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, and Charles Lamb's *Rosamund Gray*. A curious contrast this shows to the state of things in contemporary France. Though in political matters the French had broken from tradition, their literature had to wait thirty years more for liberation from the tyranny of conventional form. England meanwhile, more tenacious of political tradition than ever before, had begun to disregard the rigid literary tradition which had lasted since the time of Dryden. The *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge, which may be regarded in literature as declaring the independence of the individual spirit, appeared in 1798, the year when Nelson fought the battle of the Nile; but at first they made no great impression. Fiction at the same time seemed less vital. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, though formal tradition was broken, the renewed

strength which was to animate English literature for the next thirty years was not yet quite evident. At the moment, too, no figure in English letters had even such predominance as that of Addison in Queen Anne's time, far less such as Johnson's had been in the later years of George II. Of the elder names mentioned in our last hasty list the most memorable seems that of Edmund Burke (1729–1797). Burke.

These names of Addison, Johnson, and Burke prove quite as significant of English literature in the eighteenth century as those of Shakspere, Milton, and Dryden proved of that literature a century before. Shakspere, Milton, and Dryden seem men of three different epochs; at least comparatively, Addison, Johnson, and Burke seem men of a single type. After all, the mere names tell enough. Think of Shakspere and Dryden together, and then of Addison and Burke. Think of Milton as the figure who intervenes between the first pair, and of Johnson similarly intervening between the second. You can hardly fail to perceive the trend of English literature. In 1600 it was alive with the spontaneity, the enthusiasm, and the versatility of the Elizabethan spirit. By Dryden's time this was already extinct; throughout the century which followed him it showed little symptom of revival. The romantic revival which in Burke's time was just beginning, had, to be sure, enthusiasm; but this was too conscious to seem spontaneous. And although the names of Rogers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Landor, and Moore, who had all begun writing before 1800, suggest something like versatility, it is rather variety. They differ from one another, but compared with the Elizabethan poets each seems limited, inflexible. Versatility can hardly be held

to characterize any English man of letters who came to maturity in the eighteenth century.

So far as literature is concerned, accordingly, that century seems more and more a period of robustly formal tradition; rational, sensible, prejudiced, and toward the end restless; admirable and manly in a thousand ways, but even further, if possible, from the spontaneous, enthusiastic versatility of Elizabethan days than was the period of Dryden.

III

AMERICAN HISTORY FROM 1700 TO 1800

References

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In broad outline the history of America during the eighteenth century seems as different from that of England as was the case a century earlier. Two facts which we remarked in seventeenth-century America remained unchanged. In the first place no one really cared much who occupied the throne. The question of who was sent out as governor of a colony was more important than that of who sent him. In the second place, the absorptive power of the native American race remained undiminished, as indeed it seems still to remain. Though there was comparatively less immigration to America in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth or the nineteenth, there was enough to show our surprising power of assimilation.

Increased Importance of the State.

In another aspect, the history of America during the eighteenth century is unlike that of the century before. Until 1700, at least in New England, the dominant Eng-

lish ideal had been rather the moral than the political,—the tradition of the English Bible rather than that of the Common Law. The fathers of New England had almost succeeded in establishing "a theocracy as near as might be to that which was the glory of Israel." The story of the Mathers shows how this theocratic ambition came to grief. Church and State in America tended to separate. Once separate, the State was bound to control in public affairs; and so the Church began to decline into formalism. The eighteenth century in America, therefore, was one of growing material prosperity, under the chief guidance no longer of the clergy, but rather of that social class to whose commercial energy this prosperity was chiefly due.

New England and New France.

Meanwhile throughout the first half of our eighteenth century, external affairs constantly took a pretty definite form. Increased commercial prosperity and superficial social changes could not alter the fact that until the conquest of Canada the English colonies in America were constantly menaced by those disturbances which tradition still calls the French and Indian wars. These began before the seventeenth century closed. In 1690 Sir William Phips captured Port Royal, now Annapolis, in Nova Scotia; later in the year he came to grief in an expedition against Quebec itself; in 1704 came the still remembered sack of Deerfield in the Connecticut valley; in 1745 came Sir William Pepperell's conquest of Louisbourg; in 1755 came Braddock's defeat; in 1759 came Wolfe's final conquest at Quebec. When the eighteenth century began,—as the encircling names of Quebec, Montreal, Chicago, St. Louis, and New Orleans may still remind us,—it was doubtful whether the continent which is now the United States would ultimately be controlled by the traditions of

England or by those of continental Europe. Throughout the first half of the century this question was still in doubt, —never more so, perhaps, than when Braddock fell in what is now Western Pennsylvania. The victory on the Plains of Abraham settled the fate of a hemisphere. Once for all, the continent of America passed into the control of the race which still maintains there the traditions of English Law.

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century came a movement which throws a good deal of light on American temperament. The dissenting sect commonly called Methodist originated in a fervent evangelical protest against the corrupt, unspiritualized condition of the English Church during the reign of George II. Though Methodism made permanent impression on the middle class of England, it can hardly be regarded in England as a social force of the first historical importance. Nor were any of its manifestations there sufficient to attract the instant attention of people who now consider general English history. In America the case was different. During the earlier years of the eighteenth century the Puritan churches had begun to stiffen into formalism. Though this never went so far as to divorce religion from life, there was such decline of religious fervor as to give the more earnest clergy serious ground for alarm.

In 1738 George Whitefield, perhaps the most powerful of English revivalists, first visited the colonies. In that year he devoted himself to the spiritual awakening of Georgia. In 1740 he came to New England. The Great Awakening of religion during the next few years was largely due to his preaching. At first the clergy were disposed ardently to welcome this revival of religious en-

The Great Awakening.

thusiasm. Soon, however, the revival took a turn at which the more conservative clergy were alarmed; in 1744 Harvard College formally protested against the excesses of Whitefield, and in 1745 Yale followed this example. The religious enthusiasm which possessed the lower classes of eighteenth-century America, in short, grotesquely outran the gravely passionate ecstasies of the immigrant Puritans. So late as Cotton Mather's time, the devout of New England were still rewarded with mystic visions, wherein divine voices and heavenly figures revealed themselves to prayerful keepers of fasts and vigils. The Great Awakening expressed itself in mad shoutings and tearing off of garments. The personal contrast between the immigrant Puritans and Whitefield typifies the difference. The old ministers had entered on their duties with all the authority of degrees from English universities; Whitefield began life as a potboy in a tavern. Yet the Great Awakening testifies to one lasting fact,—a far-reaching spontaneity and enthusiasm among the humbler classes of America, which, once aroused, could produce social phenomena much more startling than Methodism produced in King George II's England.

The people who had been so profoundly stirred by this Great Awakening were the same who in 1776 declared themselves independent of the mother country. The American Revolution is important enough for separate consideration. Before speaking of that, we had best consider the literary expression of America up to 1776. So, in this general consideration of history, we need only recall a few dates. The Stamp Act was passed in 1765, the year in which Blackstone published the first volume of his *Commentaries on the Law of England.* Lexington, Con-

The Revolution.

cord, and Bunker Hill came in 1775, the year in which Burke delivered his masterly speech on *Conciliation with America*. On the Fourth of July, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed. American independence was finally acknowledged by the peace of 1783. The Constitution of the United States was adopted in 1789. In 1800 the presidency of John Adams was drawing to a close, and Washington was dead. Now, very broadly speaking, the forces which expressed themselves in these familiar facts were forces which tended in America to destroy the fortunes of established and wealthy people, and to substitute as the ruling class throughout the country one more like that which had been stirred by the Great Awakening. In other words, the Revolution once more brought to the surface of American life the sort of natives whom the Great Awakening shows so fully to have preserved the spontaneity and the enthusiasm of earlier days.

Development of American Nationality.

During the eighteenth century, in brief, America seems slowly to have been developing into an independent nationality as conservative of its traditions as England was of hers, but less obviously so because American traditions were far less threatened. The geographical isolation of America combined with the absorptive power of our native race to preserve the general type of character which America had displayed from its settlement. In the history of native Americans, the seventeenth century has already defined itself as a period of inexperience. The fact that American conditions changed so little until the Revolution implies that this national inexperience persisted. In many superficial aspects, no doubt, the native Americans of 1776, particularly of the prosperous class,

appeared to be men of the eighteenth century. In personal temper, however, Thomas Hutchinson and Samuel Adams were far more like John Winthrop and Roger Williams than Chatham and Burke were like Bacon and Lord Burleigh. One inference seems clear: the Americans of the revolutionary period retained to an incalculable degree qualities which had faded from ancestral England with the days of Queen Elizabeth.

IV

LITERATURE IN AMERICA FROM 1700 TO 1776

References

General References: On the general course of literature in America between 1700 and 1776, see Tyler; for selections, see Stedman and Hutchinson, Vol. II.

Periodical Publications: See Isaiah Thomas, *History of Printing in America*, Worcester, 1810; Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from* 1690 *to* 1872, New York: Harper, 1873; Tyler, II, 301–306.

Woolman: Woolman's *Journal*, with an introduction by Whittier, Boston: Osgood, 1873; on Woolman in general, see Tyler, *Lit. Hist. Am. Rev.*, Chapter xxxvii.

Hutchinson: Of Hutchinson's *History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay* (Vol. I, Boston, 1764; Vol. II, Boston, 1767; Vol. III, London, 1828) the first two volumes have been out of print for over a century, the last edition having been published at Salem and Boston in 1795; the third volume is to be found only in the London edition of 1828. Hutchinson also published a *Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay*, Boston, 1769. For biography, see P. O. Hutchinson, *The Diary and Letters of His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson, Esq.*, 2 vols., Boston: Houghton, 1884–86; J. K. Hosmer, *The Life of Thomas Hutchinson*, Boston: Houghton, 1896. The late Charles Deane compiled a Hutchinson bibliography, which was privately printed at Boston in 1857; see also, on the bibliography of Hutchinson, Winsor's *America*, III, 344.

As the material prosperity of America increased, it tended to develop the middle colonies; during the greater part of the eighteenth century the most important town in America was not Boston, but Philadelphia. And though in purely religious writing New England kept the lead, the centre of its religious thought had shifted from the shore of Massachusetts Bay to that of Long Island Sound.

Growth of Colleges Outside New England.

Some familiar dates in the history of American education emphasize these facts. Yale College, founded in 1700, began its career under King William III, until whose reign the only established school of higher learning in America had been Harvard College, founded under Charles I. The avowed purpose of the founding of Yale was to maintain the orthodox traditions threatened by the constantly growing liberalism of Harvard. Under George II, three considerable colleges were founded in the middle colonies. In 1746, Princeton College was established to maintain an orthodoxy as stout as that of Yale. In 1749, partly under the auspices of the American Philosophical Society which had lately been founded by Franklin, the University of Pennsylvania began an academic history which more than most in America has kept free from entanglement with dogma. In 1754, King's College, now Columbia University, was founded at New York. Meanwhile Harvard College had done little more than preserve its own prudently liberal traditions, with no marked alteration in either character or size. The higher intellectual activity of America was clearly tending for a while to centralize itself elsewhere than in those New England regions where the American intellect had first been active.

These two changes, geographical and temperamental, may be shown by summarizing the titles of the chief American publications, as they are recorded in Whitcomb's *Chronological Outlines of American Literature*, during such typical periods as 1701–1705, 1731–1735, and 1761–1765.

Between 1701 and 1705 Whitcomb mentions eighteen titles, of which fifteen—ten by the Mathers—belong in New England, one in the Middle States, and two in the

South. Of these three publications outside New England, the only one which is now remembered is a *History of the Present State of Virginia* (1705) by ROBERT BEVERLEY (about 1675–1716). At this period, publication evidently centred in New England, and revealed the immense industry and influence of the Mathers. And all of Whitcomb's eighteen titles fall under our familiar headings of (1) Religious writings and (2) Historical writings.

Between 1731 and 1735 Whitcomb mentions twenty-nine titles, of which twenty-five are by known individual writers. Of these twenty-five titles, fourteen are from New England and eleven from the Middle and Southern States. Again, of these twenty-five titles, only fifteen can be brought under the headings of Religion and History, which we found to include nearly all the publications of the seventeenth century and of the first few years of the eighteenth. Among the writings between 1731 and 1735 which are neither historical nor religious are several which cannot possibly be called literature, such as a book about the birds of the Carolinas, a spelling-book, and a Hebrew grammar. Among the remaining titles are *Bachelors' Hall*, an imitative poem in couplets, by GEORGE WEBB; *Poor Richard's Almanac;* FRANKLIN'S *Essay on Human Vanity;* and JAMES LOGAN'S *Cato's Moral Distichs Englished in Couplets.* These all came from Philadelphia.

Publication in the Middle Colonies.

Between 1761 and 1765, Whitcomb mentions thirty-one titles of works by known individual writers; and these are almost exactly divided between New England and the Middle and Southern colonies. Religion and the old-fashioned kind of history include only nine; of those remaining, a few are scientific, and one is dramatic, but much the greater number—twelve—are, to quote the title

Political Writing.

of one of them, *Considerations on Behalf of the Colonies.* Some of this political writing is in verse ; some of it takes the form of the periodical essay. Both essays and verse closely imitate earlier English work.

These few titles show that New England, supreme at the beginning of the century, was giving place, as regards number of writers, literary feeling, and effort at purely literary forms, to the middle colonies. Again, as the century went on the concerns of the State began to seem more pressing than those of the Church. Especially the problem of independence from Great Britain forced itself upon writers and readers alike. The political writing which resulted often took the form of light satire, burlesque, or mock epic. Thus both the form and the substance of American writing in the middle of the century were less severe than had been the case earlier. We shall now look a little more closely at two or three phases of writing which illustrate this change.

Newspapers and Almanacs.

During the first half of the eighteenth century there had rapidly grown up in America a profusion of periodical publications. We had no *Tatler*, to be sure, or *Spectator;* but from 1704, when the *Boston News Letter* was established, we had a constantly increasing number of newspapers. A dozen years before the Revolution these had everywhere become as familiar and as popular as were those annual almanacs which had already sprung up in the seventeenth century, and of which the most highly developed example was Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac.* These indications of every-day reading show that the eighteenth century in America was a period of growing intellectual activity and curiosity among the whole people.

In the middle colonies there was meanwhile developing an aspect of religion very different from that which commended itself to the orthodox Calvinism of New England. Undoubtedly the most important religious writing in America at the period with which we are now concerned was that of Jonathan Edwards. But the memory of another American, of widely different temper, has tended, during a century and more, to strengthen in the estimation of those who love comfortable spiritual thought expressed with fervent simplicity. JOHN WOOLMAN (1720–1772) was a Quaker farmer of New Jersey, who became an itinerant preacher in 1746, and who began to testify vigorously against slavery as early as 1753. It was the Quakers' faith that we may save ourselves by voluntarily accepting Christ,—by willing attention to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. This belief Woolman phrased so sweetly and memorably that Charles Lamb advised his readers to "get the writings of John Woolman by heart, and love the early Quakers."

John Woolman.

Though such writings as Woolman's throw light on a growing phase of American sentiment, they were not precisely literature. Neither was such political writing as we shall consider more particularly when we come to the Revolution; nor yet was the more scholarly historical writing, of which the principal example is probably the *History of the Colony of Massachusets-Bay*, by Governor THOMAS HUTCHINSON (1711–1780). Neglected by reason of the traditional unpopularity which sincere, self-sacrificing Toryism brought on the author, the last native governor of provincial Massachusetts, the book remains an admirable piece of serious historical writing, not vivid, picturesque, or very interesting, but dignified, earnest,

Thomas Hutchinson.

and just. In the history of pure literature, however, it has no great importance.

Further still from pure literature seems the work of the two men of this period who for general reasons now deserve such separate consideration as we gave Cotton Mather. They deserve it as representing two distinct aspects of American character, which closely correspond with the two ideals most inseparable from our native language. One of these ideals is the religious or moral, inherent in the lasting tradition of the English Bible; the other is the political or social, equally inherent in the equally lasting tradition of the English Law. In the pre-revolutionary years of our eighteenth century, the former was most characteristically expressed by Jonathan Edwards; and the kind of national temper which must always underlie the latter was incarnate in Benjamin Franklin. Before considering the Revolution and the literature which came with it and after it, we may best attend to these men in turn.

Edwards and Franklin.

V

JONATHAN EDWARDS

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Life. Jonathan Edwards was born at East Windsor, Connecticut, on October 5, 1703. In 1720 he took his degree at Yale, where he was a tutor from 1724 to 1726. In 1727 he was ordained colleague to his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, minister, of Northampton, Massachusetts. Here he remained settled until 1750, when his growing severity of discipline resulted in his dismissal. The next year he became a missionary to the Stockbridge Indians, in a region at that time remote from civilization. In 1757 he was chosen to succeed his son-in-law, Burr, as President of Princeton College. He died at Princeton, in consequence of inoculation for small-pox, on March 22, 1758.

Beyond doubt, Edwards has had more influence on subsequent thought than any other American theologian. In view of this, the uneventfulness of his life, so utterly apart from public affairs, becomes significant of the con-

dition of the New England ministry during his lifetime. He was born hardly two years after Increase Mather, the lifelong champion of theocracy, was deposed from the presidency of Harvard College; and as our glance at the Mathers must have reminded us, an eminent Yankee minister of the seventeenth century was almost as necessarily a politician as he was a divine. Yet Edwards, the most eminent of our eighteenth-century ministers, had less to do with public affairs than many ministers of the present day. A more thorough separation of Church and State than is indicated by his career could hardly exist.

Jonathan Edwards

Nothing less than such separation from public affairs could have permitted that concentration on matters of the other world which makes the work of Edwards still potent. From his own time to ours his influence has been so strong that to this day discussions of him are generally concerned with the question of how far his systematic theology is true. For our purposes this question is not material, nor yet is that of what his system was in detail. It is enough to observe that throughout his career, as preacher and writer alike, he set forth Calvinism in its most uncompromising form, reasoned out with great logical power to extreme conclusions. As for matters of earthly fact, he mentioned them only as they bore on his theological or philosophical contentions.

His Uncompromising Calvinism.

Early in life, for example, he fell in love with Sarah

Pierrepont, daughter of a New Haven minister, and a descendant of the great emigrant minister Thomas Hooker, of Hartford. Accordingly this lady presented herself to his mind as surely among God's chosen, an opinion which he recorded when she was thirteen years old and he was twenty, in the following words:— Sarah Pierrepont.

"They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where he is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that he loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her the whole world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a wonderful calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

That little record of Edwards's innocent love, which felt sure that its object enjoyed the blessings of God's elect, has a tender beauty. What tradition has mostly remembered of him, however, is rather the vigor with which he set forth the inevitable fate of fallen man.

His most familiar work is the sermon on *Sinners in the*

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

Hands of an Angry God, 1741, of which one of the least forgotten passages runs thus:—

"O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell:—you hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. . . .

"It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery; when you look forward you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this Almighty merciless vengeance; and then, when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains."

His Doctrine.

This insistence on sin and its penalty has impressed people so deeply that they have been apt to hold it comprehensive of Edwards's theological system. Really this is far from the case. He stoutly defended the divine justice of his pitiless doctrine, to be sure, with characteristic logic:—

"God is a being infinitely lovely, because he hath infinite excellency and beauty. To have infinite excellency and beauty, is the same thing as to have infinite loveliness. He is a being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and therefore he is infinitely honourable. He is infinitely exalted above the greatest potentates of the earth, and highest

angels in heaven; and therefore is infinitely more honourable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience is infinitely strong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed in himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependence upon him.

"So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving of infinite punishment."

Yet in spite of all this, he held, God now and again, in His mercy, is pleased to receive certain human beings into the fellowship of the saints, there to enjoy forever such peace as he thus describes:—

"The peace of the Christian infinitely differs from that of the worldling, in that it is unfailing and eternal peace. That peace which carnal men have in the things of this world is, according to the foundation it is built upon, of short continuance; like the comfort of a dream, 1 John ii, 17, 1 Cor. vii, 31. These things, the best and most durable of them, are like bubbles on the face of the water; they vanish in a moment, Hos. x, 7.

"But the foundation of the Christian's peace is everlasting; it is what no time, no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies; it will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed, and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life."

Edwards on the Freedom of the Will.

In plain truth, what people commonly remember of Edwards is merely one extreme to which he reasoned out his consistent system. Like the older theology of Calvin it all rests on the essential wickedness of the human will, concerning which Edwards's great treatise on the *Freedom of the Will*, 1754, is still significant. He asserts something like an utter fatalism, a universality of cause affecting even our volition, quite beyond human control. This fatal

perversion of human will he believes to spring from that ancestral curse which forbids any child of Adam to exert the will in true harmony with the will of God. Reconciliation he holds possible only when divine power comes, with unmerited grace, to God's elect.

Edwards's premises lead pretty straight to his conclusions. Yet it is hardly too much to say that neither seem quite convincing to most modern minds. One can see why. In his American world, so relieved from the pressure of external fact that people generally behaved much better than is usual in earthly history, Edwards, whose personal life was exceptionally removed from anything practical, reasoned out with unflinching logic, to extreme conclusions, a kind of philosophy which is justified in experience only by such things as occur in densely populated, corrupt societies. He tried logically to extend Calvinism in a world where there were few more dreadful exhibitions of human depravity than occasional cheating, the reading of eighteenth-century novels, and such artless merry-makings as have always gladdened youth in the Yankee country. Whoever knew American life in the middle of the eighteenth century and honestly asked himself whether its manifestations were such as the theology of Edwards would explain, could hardly avoid a deeper and deeper conviction that, even though he was unable to find a flaw in Edwards's system, the whole thing was hardly in accordance with fact.

Summary.

VI

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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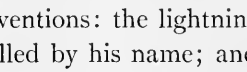
The contemporary of Edwards who best shows what American human nature had become, is Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790). Unlike the persons at whom we have glanced, this man, who became more eminent than all the rest together, sprang from inconspicuous origin. The son of a tallow chandler, he was born in Boston, on January 6, 1706. As a mere boy, he was apprenticed to his brother, a printer, with whom he did not get along very well. At seventeen he ran away, and finally turned up in Philadelphia, where he attracted the interest of some influential people. A year later he went to England, carrying from these friends letters which he supposed might be useful in the mother country. The letters proved worthless; in 1726, after a rather vagabond life in Eng- **Life.**

land, he returned to Philadelphia. There he remained for some thirty years. He began by shrewdly advancing himself as printer, publisher, and shopkeeper; later, when his extraordinary ability had drawn about him people of more and more solid character, he became a local public man and proved himself also an admirable self-taught man of science. In 1732, the year of Washington's birth, he started that *Poor Richard's Almanac* whose aphorisms have remained so popular. It is Poor Richard who tells us, among other things, that "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise;" that "God helps them that help themselves;" and that "Honesty is the best policy." After fifteen years Franklin's affairs had so prospered that he could retire from shopkeeping and give himself over to scientific work. He made numerous inventions: the lightning-rod, for example; the stove still called by his name; and double spectacles, with one lens in the upper half for observing distant objects, and another in the lower half for reading. In 1755 he was made Postmaster-General of the American colonies; and the United States post-office is said still to be conducted in many respects on the system he then established. So he lived until 1757, the year before Jonathan Edwards died.

Poor Richard's Almanac.



In 1757 he was sent to England as the Agent of Pennsylvania. There he remained, with slight intervals, for eigh-

teen years, becoming agent of other colonies too. In 1775 he returned home, where in 1776 he was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Before the end of that year he was despatched as minister to France, where he remained until 1785. Then he came home and was elected President of Pennsylvania. In 1787 he was among the signers of the Constitution of the United States. On the 17th of April, 1790, he died at Philadelphia, a city to which his influence had given not only the best municipal system of eighteenth-century America, but also, among other institutions which have survived, the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Franklin of world tradition, the great Franklin, is the statesman and diplomatist who from 1757 until 1785 proved himself both in England and in France to possess such remarkable power. But the Franklin with whom we are concerned is rather the shrewd native American whose first fifty years were spent in preparation for his world-wide career. The effect of his inconspicuous origin appeared in several ways. For one thing he had small love for anything in Massachusetts; for another, he instinctively emigrated to a region where he should not be hampered by troublesome family traditions; for a third, he consorted during his earlier life with men who though often clever were loose in morals. Before middle life, however, his vagabond period was at an end. By strict attention to business and imperturbable good sense, he steadily bettered his condition. By the time he was fifty years old his studies in electricity had gained him European reputation; and in all the American colonies there was no practical public man of more deserved local importance.

Development of Character.

In the course of these years he had written and published copiously. None of his work, however, can be called exactly literary. Its purpose was either to instruct people concerning his scientific and other discoveries and principles; or else, as in *Poor Richard's Almanac*,—perhaps his nearest approach to pure letters,—to influence conduct.

How he learned to write.

But if Franklin's writings were never precisely literature, his style was generally admirable. His account in the *Autobiography* of how, while still a Boston boy, he learned to write, is at once characteristic of his temper and conclusive of his accomplishment:—

"About this time I met with an odd volume of the 'Spectator.' It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my 'Spectator' with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavoured to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. My time for these exercises and for

reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it."

Feeling about religion.

Sound eighteenth-century English this, though hardly equal to its model. Even more characteristic than the English of this passage, however, is Franklin's feeling about religion, implied in its last sentence. The Boston where this printer's boy stayed away from church to teach himself how to write was the very town where Increase and Cotton Mather were still preaching the dogmas of Puritan theocracy; and a few days' journey westward Jonathan Edwards, only three years older than Franklin, was beginning his lifelong study of the relation of mankind to eternity. To the religious mind of New England, earthly life remained a mere fleeting moment. Life must always end soon, and death as we see it actually seems unending. With this solemn truth constantly in mind, the New England Puritans of Franklin's day, like their devout ancestors, and many of their devout descendants, bent their whole energy toward eternal welfare as distinguished from anything temporal. Yet in their principal town Franklin, a man of the plain people, exposed to no influences but those of his own day and country, was coolly preferring the study of earthly accomplishment to any question which concerned matters beyond human life.

Another extract from his *Autobiography* carries his religious history a little further:—

"My parents had early given me religious impressions, and brought me through my childhood piously in the Dissenting way. But I was

scarce fifteen, when, after doubting by turns of several points, as I found them disputed in the different books I read, I began to doubt of Revelation itself. Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist. My arguments perverted some others, particularly Collins and Ralph; but, each of them having afterward wrong'd me greatly without the least compunction, and recollecting Keith's conduct towards me (who was another free-thinker), and my own towards Vernon and Miss Read, which at times gave me great trouble, I began to suspect that this doctrine, tho' it might be true, was not very useful."

Rationalism.

"Not very useful:" the good sense of Franklin tested religion itself by its effects on every-day conduct.

The cool scientific temper with which he observed one of Whitefield's impassioned public discourses is equally characteristic:—

"He preach'd one evening from the top of the Court-house steps, which are in the middle of Market-street, and on the west side of Second-street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were filled with hearers to a considerable distance. Being among the hindmost in Market-street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard by retiring backwards down the street towards the river; and I found that his voice was distinct till I came near Front-street, when some noise in that street obscur'd it. Imagining then a semicircle, of which my distance should be the radius, and that it were filled with auditors, to each of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than thirty thousand. This reconcil'd me to the newspaper accounts of his having preached to twenty-five thousand people in the fields, and to ancient histories of generals haranguing whole armies, of which I had sometimes doubted."

To Franklin, in brief, things on earth were of paramount importance. He never denied the existence of God, but

he deemed God a beneficent spirit, to whom men, if they behave decently, may confidently leave the affairs of another world. Of earthly morality, meanwhile, so far as it commended itself to good sense, Franklin was shrewdly careful. No passage in his *Autobiography* (1771, 1781, 1788) is more familiar than the list of virtues which he drew up and endeavored in turn to practise. The order in which he chose to arrange them is as follows: Temperance, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality (under which his little expository motto is very characteristic: "Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself"), Industry, Sincerity (under which he directs us to "Use no hurtful deceit"), Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquillity, Chastity, and finally one which he added later as peculiarly needful to him,—Humility.

Rules of Conduct.

The deliberate good sense with which Franklin treated matters of religion and morality, he displayed equally in his scientific writings; and, a little later, in the public documents and correspondence which made him as eminent in diplomacy and statecraft as he had earlier been in science and in local affairs. His examination before the House of Commons in 1766 shows him as a public man at his best.

A letter to a London newspaper, written the year before, shows another phase of his mind, less frequently remembered. It is a bantering comment on ignorant articles concerning the American colonies which appeared at about this time in the daily prints:—

"I beg leave to say, that all the articles of news that seem improbable are not mere inventions. The very tails of the American sheep are so laden with wool, that each has a little car or wagon on four little wheels, to support and keep it from trailing on the ground. Would

Humor.

they caulk their ships, would they even litter their horses with wool, if it were not both plenty and cheap? And what signifies the dearness of labor when an English shilling passes for five-and-twenty? Their engaging three hundred silk throwsters here in one week for New York was treated as a fable, because, forsooth, they have 'no silk there to throw.' Those, who make this objection, perhaps do not know, that, at the same time the agents from the King of Spain were at Quebec to contract for one thousand pieces of cannon to be made there for the fortification of Mexico, and at New York engaging the usual supply of woollen floor carpets for their West India houses, other agents from the Emperor of China were at Boston treating about an exchange of raw silk for wool, to be carried in Chinese junks through the Straits of Magellan.

"And yet all this is as certainly true, as the account said to be from Quebec, in all the papers of last week, that the inhabitants of Canada are making preparations for a cod and whale fishery 'this summer in the upper Lakes.' Ignorant people may object, that the upper Lakes are fresh, and that cod and whales are salt-water fish; but let them know, Sir, that cod, like other fish when attacked by their enemies, fly into any water where they can be safest; that whales, when they have a mind to eat cod, pursue them wherever they fly; and that the grand leap of the whale in the chase up the Falls of Niagara is esteemed, by all who have seen it, as one of the finest spectacles in nature."

This passage is noteworthy as an early instance of what we now call American humor,—the grave statement, with a sober face, of obviously preposterous nonsense. Though its style is almost Addisonian, its substance is more like what in our own days has given world-wide popularity to Mark Twain.

Summary. The character of Franklin is too considerable for adequate treatment in any such space as ours; but perhaps we have seen enough to understand how human nature tended to develop in eighteenth-century America, where for a time economic and social pressure was so relaxed.

Devoting himself with unceasing energy, common-sense, and tact to practical matters, and never seriously concerning himself with eternity, Franklin developed into a living example of such rational, kindly humanity as the philosophy of revolutionary France held attainable by whoever should be freed from the distorting influence of accidental and outworn institutions. In Jonathan Edwards we found theoretical Puritanism proclaiming more uncompromisingly than ever that human nature is totally depraved. At that very time Franklin, by living as well and as sensibly as he could, was getting himself ready to face the eternities, feeling, as he wrote to President Stiles, that "having experienced the goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously through a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness."

The America which in the same years bred Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin bred too the American Revolution.

VII

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

References

(*a*) history

Good Short Accounts: Channing, *Student's History*, Chapters iv and v. Note the bibliographical references at the beginning of each chapter, and especially the lists of "Illustrative Material."

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(*b*) literature

Literary History: The great book on the literature of the Revolutionary period is M. C. Tyler's *Literary History of the American Revolution*, 2 vols., New York: Putnam, 1897. Whoever cannot read all of Tyler may well select Chapters i, x § vi, xiii, xv, xxi, xxv, xxvi, xxix.

Selections: Hart, *Contemporaries*, II, Parts vi–viii, especially Nos. 131, 149, 167, 196; Stedman and Hutchinson, Vol. III, especially pp. 91–98, 113–116, 175–180, 186–205, 218–219, 236–251, 338–361.

The Revolution a Civil War.

The war which began at Lexington and ended six years later with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown has too often been considered a rising against a foreign invader. No error could be much graver. Up to 1760 the colonies of America were on the whole loyal to the crown of England. England, of course, was separated from America by the Atlantic Ocean; and, so far as time goes, the North Atlantic of the eighteenth century was wider than the equatorial Pacific is to-day. But the peo-

ple of the American colonies were as truly compatriots of Englishmen as the citizens of our Southern States in 1860 were compatriots of New England Yankees. The Revolution, in short, was a civil war, like the wars of Cavaliers and Roundheads a century before in England, or the war in our own country between 1861 and 1865. And like most civil wars it was partly due to honest misunderstanding. The two sides used the same terms in dispute, but they applied them to widely different things.

England and the Colonies misunderstood each other.

Take, for example, one of the best-remembered phrases of the period,—"No taxation without representation." What does this really mean? To the American mind of to-day, as to the mind of the revolutionary leaders in King George's colonies, it means that no town or city or other group of men should be taxed by a legislative body to which it has not actually elected representatives, generally resident within its limits. To the English mind of 1770, on the other hand, it simply meant that no British subject should be taxed by a body where there was not somebody to represent his case. This view, the traditional one of the English Common Law, was held by the Loyalists of America. When the revolutionists complained that America elected no representatives to Parliament, the loyalists answered that neither did many of the most populous towns in the mother country; and that the interests of those towns were perfectly well cared for by members elected elsewhere. If anybody inquired what members of Parliament were protecting the interests of the American colonies, the loyalists would have named the elder Pitt, Fox, and Burke, and would have asked whether New England or Virginia could have exported to Parliament representatives in any respect superior.

So it was in regard to other important questions of government: Englishmen and Americans in 1775 were honestly unable to understand one another. The reason for this disagreement was that by 1775 the course of American history had made our conception of legal rights different from that of the English.

We had developed local traditions of our own, which we believed as immemorial as ever were the local traditions of the mother country. The question of representation, for example, was not abstract; it was one of established constitutional practice, which had taken one form in England and another very different form in America. So when discussion arose, Englishmen meant one thing by "representation" and Americans meant something else. Misunderstanding followed, a family quarrel, a civil war, and world disunion. Beneath this world disunion, all the while, is a deeper fact, binding America and England truly together at heart,—each really believed itself to be asserting the rights which immemorial custom had sanctioned.

The Reason for this Misunderstanding.

We can now perhaps begin to see what the American Revolution means. By 1775, the national experience which had been accumulating in England from the days of Queen Elizabeth had brought the temper of the native English to a state very remote from what this native temper had been under the Tudor sovereigns. Meanwhile, the lack of economic pressure to which we have given the name of national inexperience had kept the original American temper singularly unaltered. When at last, on the accession of George III, legal and constitutional questions were presented in the same terms to English-speaking temperaments on different sides of the Atlantic, these tem-

peraments had been forced so far apart that neither could appreciate what each other meant. So neither would have been true to the deepest traditions of their common race, had anything less than the Revolution resulted.

Nine Sorts of Revolutionary Literature.

This deep national misunderstanding naturally gave rise to a great deal of publication. Most of this was controversial, and of no more than passing interest. Yet no consideration of literature in America can quite neglect it. Professor Tyler, who has studied this subject more thoroughly than anyone else—and who uses the term "literature" so generously as to include within it the Declaration of Independence, divides the literature of the Revolution into nine classes:* correspondence, state papers, oral addresses, political essays, political satires in verse, lyric poetry, minor literary facetiæ, drama, and prose narratives of experience. Most of this publication we may put aside once for all; it is only material for history. But we may wisely glance at a few of the better written works such as the political essays of James Otis, John Dickinson, and Francis Hopkinson, on the one side; and those of Samuel Seabury, and the satires in verse of Jonathan Odell, on the other.

Otis.

James Otis (1725–1783), of Massachusetts, whose famous speech in 1761 against "writs of assistance" was based rather upon precedent than upon abstract rights, published in 1764 a pamphlet called *The Rights of the Colonies Asserted and Proved.* In this essay Otis declared that "by the law of God and nature" the colonists were entitled to all the rights of their fellow-subjects in Great Britain. Again, in 1765, Otis's famous *Considerations*

* M. C. Tyler, *The Literary History of the American Revolution*, I, 9–29.

on Behalf of the Colonies, in a Letter to a Noble Lord, attacked the English idea of virtual representation and declared that the mother country should keep the colonies by nourishing them as the apple of her eye. Otis's writings show the temper of an advocate, trained in the English law, but so eagerly interested in his cause as to be less and less careful about precedent.

Dickinson.

JOHN DICKINSON (1732–1808), of Philadelphia, is best known by his *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies* (1767). They are said to have gone through thirty editions in six months. The main object of these pamphlets, which were among the most influential of the period, was, in Dickinson's own words, "to convince the people of these colonies that they are, at this moment, exposed to the most imminent dangers; and to persuade them, immediately, vigorously, and unanimously, to exert themselves, in the most firm but most peaceable manner, for obtaining relief."

Hopkinson.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1737–1791), also of Philadelphia, was perhaps the most distinctly American writer of all. He had been in England between 1766 and 1768. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and he died a United States District Judge. His only popular work is a poem—the *Battle of the Kegs* (1778)—which ridiculed the British army when it occupied Philadelphia. But some of his prose writings during the Revolutionary period show that he felt, as distinctly as people feel today, how widely the national temperaments of England and of America had diverged.

Bishop Seabury.

Among the Loyalist writers who opposed the doctrines of such men as the foregoing, one of the most conspicuous was SAMUEL SEABURY (1729–1796), of Connecticut, later

the first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. Under the name of a "Westchester Farmer," he wrote a brilliant series of pamphlets (1774–1775), which shrewdly pointed out the misfortunes which must ensue from some of the acts of the first Continental Congress.

Nearer to pure literature, was the work of the Rev. Jonathan Odell (1737–1818), of New Jersey, whose satires in verse, *The Word of Congress*, *The Congratulation*, *The Feu de Joie*, and *The American Times*, all published in 1779–1780, ridiculed the Revolutionists in the manner of the English satirist Charles Churchill (1731–1764). Odell.

This eager controversial writing of the Revolution is of great historical interest. Professor Tyler sets it forth with a minuteness and impartiality which give his volumes on the period a value almost equal to that of the innumerable documents on which they are based. In a study like ours, which is chiefly concerned with pure literature, however, little of this work seems positively memorable. Decidedly more memorable we shall find the American writings of the years which followed.

VIII

LITERATURE IN AMERICA FROM 1776 TO 1800

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BETWEEN the close of the Revolution and the beginning of the nineteenth century, our newly independent country was adrift; the true course of our national life was slow in declaring itself. Until the very end of the eighteenth century, we accordingly remained without a lasting literature. But, like the earlier period, that last quarter of this eighteenth century produced a good deal of publication at which we must glance.

Writings of American Statesmen.

Our public men, Hamilton, Samuel Adams, Jefferson, Gouverneur Morris, John Adams, Madison, Jay, and others, wrote admirably. They were earnest and thoughtful; they had strong common sense; they were far-sighted and temperate; and they expressed themselves with that dignified urbanity which in their time marked the English of educated people. In purely literary history, however, they can hardly be regarded as much more important

than Sir William Blackstone (1723–1780) is in the literary history of England.

The "Federalist."

This kind of American writing reached its acme in 1787 and 1788, when Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay supported the still unaccepted Constitution of the United States in a remarkable series of political essays, named the *Federalist*. As a series of formal essays, the *Federalist* groups itself roughly with the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and those numerous descendants of theirs which fill the literary records of eighteenth-century England. It differs, however, from most of these, in both substance and purpose. The *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and the best of their successors, dealt with superficial matters in a spirit of good-natured reproof: the *Federalist* deals, in an argumentative spirit as earnest as that of any Puritan divine, with great political principles; and it is so wisely thoughtful that one may almost declare it the permanent basis of sound thinking concerning American constitutional law. Like all the educated writing of the eighteenth century, too, it is phrased with a rhythmical balance and urbane polish which give it claim to literary distinction. After all, however, one can hardly feel it much more significant in a history of pure letters than are the opinions in which a little later Judge Marshall and Judge Story developed and expounded the constitutional law which the *Federalist* did so much to establish. Its true character appears when we remember the most important thing published in England during the same years,—the poetry of Robert Burns. The contrast between Burns and the *Federalist* tells the whole literary story. Just as in the seventeenth century the only serious literature of America was a phase of that half-historical, half-theological work which had been a

minor part of English literature generations before; so in the eighteenth century the chief product of American literature was an extremely mature example of such political pamphleteering as in England had been a minor phase of letters during the period of Queen Anne. Pure letters in America were still to come.

Even during the seventeenth century, however, as we saw in our glance at the "Tenth Muse," Mrs. Anne Bradstreet, there had been in America sporadic and consciously imitative efforts to produce something literary. So there were during the eighteenth century. We had sundry writers of aphoristic verse remotely following the tradition of Pope; and we had satire, modelled on that of Charles Churchill, a temporarily popular English writer. This did not satisfy our growing national ambition. Toward the end of the century, a little group of clever and enthusiastic men made a serious attempt to establish a vigorous native literature; and though the results of this effort were neither excellent nor permanent, the effort was earnest and characteristic enough to deserve attention.

Efforts to Establish a Native Literature.

To understand its place in our literary records we must recall something of our intellectual history. This may be said to have begun with the foundation of Harvard College in 1636. Throughout the seventeenth century, Harvard, then the only school of the higher learning in America, remained the only organized centre of American intellectual life. Cotton Mather, we remember, was a Harvard graduate, a member of the Board of Overseers and of the Corporation, and an eager aspirant for the presidency of the college. Long before his busy life was ended, however, Harvard had swerved from the old Puritan traditon; and Yale College, the stronghold of New England ortho-

doxy, had consequently been established in New Haven. It was from Yale that Jonathan Edwards graduated.

New England no longer the Centre of Letters.

The fact that the centre of American intellectual life was no longer on the shores of Boston Bay was again attested by the career of Franklin, who, though born in Boston, lived mostly in what was then the principal city of America,—Philadelphia. In what we said of the *Federalist*, too, the same trend was implied. Boston bred revolutionary worthies, of course: James Otis was a Massachusetts man; so were John and Samuel Adams; so earlier was Thomas Hutchinson; so later was Fisher Ames. But of the chief writers of the *Federalist*, Hamilton and Jay were from New York; and Madison was one of that great school of Virginia public men which included Patrick Henry, and Jefferson, and Washington, and Marshall, and many more. In the American perspective of the eighteenth century, Eastern Massachusetts does not loom so large in the foreground as Massachusetts tradition would have us believe.

Timothy Dwight

Dwight.

So it is not surprising that the highest literary activity of the later eighteenth century in America was started at Yale College. The most eminent of the men of letters who developed there was TIMOTHY DWIGHT (1752–1817), a grandson of Jonathan Edwards. He took his degree in 1769, and remained a tutor at Yale until 1777. He then became for a year a chaplain in the Continental Army. While tutor at Yale he co-operated with his col-

league, John Trumbull, in the production of some conventional essays modelled on the *Spectator*. While chaplain in the army he wrote a popular song entitled *Columbia*. Of this the last of its six stanzas is a sufficient example; the final couplet repeats the opening words of the poem:—

> "Thus, as down a lone valley, with cedars o'erspread,
> From war's dread confusion I pensively strayed—
> The gloom from the face of fair heaven retired;
> The winds ceased to murmur; the thunders expired;
> Perfumes, as of Eden, flowed sweetly along,
> And a voice, as of angels, enchantingly sung:
> 'Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
> The queen of the world, and the child of the skies.'"

His Travels and Poems.

In 1783 Dwight became minister of Greenfield, Connecticut. In 1795 he was made President of Yale College, an office which he held to his death in 1817. As President, he wrote his posthumously published *Travels in New England and New York* (1821–22), which record experiences during a number of summer journeys and remain an authority on the condition of those regions during his time. He did some sound work in theology too; but by this time Calvinistic theology belongs apart from pure letters even in America. In 1788, however, he published some of his ecclesiastical views in an anonymous poem entitled *The Triumph of Infidelity*, which expresses vigorous theologic conservatism in the traditional manner of the early English eighteenth-century satires. Dwight also wrote a poem called *Greenfield Hill* (1794), which is long, tedious, formal, and turgid; but indicates, like the good President's travels, that he was touched by a sense of the beauties of nature in his native country.

Toward the end of the century the literary group of

The "Hartford Wits."

which President Dwight is the most memorable figure developed into a recognized little company, designated as the "Hartford Wits"; for most of them, though graduates of Yale, lived at one time or another in the old capital of colonial Connecticut. The chief of these "Hartford Wits" were John Trumbull and Joel Barlow.

John Trumbull.

JOHN TRUMBULL (1750–1831), on the whole the more important, graduated at Yale in 1767. In 1769 he co-operated with Dwight in publishing that series of essays in the manner of the *Spectator*. From 1771 to 1773 he was a tutor at Yale; afterwards he practised law in New Haven and Boston; and in 1781 he went to Hartford, where he remained as lawyer and later as Judge of the Supreme Court until 1819. From 1825 until his death in 1831 he lived at Detroit in Michigan. Trumbull's principal works are two long poems in the manner of Butler's *Hudibras* (1663–1678). The first, entitled the "*Progress of Dulness*," and written between 1772 and 1774, satirizes the state of clerical education.

Trumbull's other Hudibrastic work is a mock epic entitled *M'Fingal*, written between 1774 and 1782, which satirizes the follies of his countrymen, particularly of the Tory persuasion. The poem had great popularity; it is said to have passed through more than thirty editions. A taste of it may be had from the following description of how M'Fingal, a caricatured Tory, was punished by a patriot mob for cutting down a Liberty pole:—

"Forthwith the crowd proceed to deck
With halter'd noose M'Fingal's neck,
While he in peril of his soul
Stood tied half-hanging to the pole;
Then lifting high the ponderous jar,
Pour'd o'er his head the smoaking tar.

With less profusion once was spread
Oil on the Jewish monarch's head,
That down his beard and vestments ran,
And covered all his outward man.

* * * * *

His flowing wig, as next the brim,
First met and drank the sable stream;
Adown his visage stern and grave
Roll'd and adhered the viscid wave;
With arms depending as he stood,
Each cup capacious holds the flood;
From nose and chin's remotest end
The tarry icicles descend;
Till all o'erspread, with colors gay,
He glittered to the western ray,
Like sleet-bound trees in wintry skies,
Or Lapland idol carved in ice.
And now the feather-bag display'd
Is waved in triumph o'er his head,
And clouds him o'er with feathers missive,
And down upon the tar, adhesive:

* * * * *

Now all complete appears our Squire,
Like Gorgon or Chimæra dire;
Nor more could boast on Plato's plan
To rank among the race of man,
Or prove his claim to human nature,
As a two-legg'd unfeather'd creature."

Now, clearly, this is not *Hudibras*, any more than John Trumbull, the respectable and scholarly Connecticut lawyer of the closing eighteenth century, was Samuel Butler, the prototype of Grub Street in Restoration London. Most historians of American literature who have touched on Trumbull have accordingly emphasized the difference between *M'Fingal* and *Hudibras*. For our purposes the

M'Fingal and Hudibras.

likeness between the poems seems more significant. Butler died, poor and neglected, in 1680; Trumbull was prosperously alive one hundred and fifty years later; and yet their poems are so much alike as to indicate in the cleverest American satirist of the closing eighteenth century a temper essentially like that of the cleverest English satirist of a century before. Butler was born less than ten years after Queen Elizabeth died, and Trumbull only ten years before the accession of King George III. These facts are a fresh indication of how nearly the native temper of America remained like that of the first immigration.

Joel Barlow.

Joel Barlow (1754 or 1755–1812), the other Hartford Wit who is still remembered, was rather more erratic. While a Yale undergraduate he served in the Continental Army, in which he was afterward a chaplain from 1780 to 1783. In 1786 he became a lawyer at Hartford, where he was later the editor of a weekly newspaper; and in 1787 he published an epic poem entitled *The Vision of Columbus*, which by 1807 had been elaborated into *The Columbiad*. Even in its first form this turgid epic was the most ambitious attempt at serious literature which had appeared in the United States. It brought Barlow political influence. He went abroad, first as a sort of business agent, and had something to do with politics in both

France and England. From 1795 to 1797 he was United States Consul at Algiers. From 1797 to 1805 he lived in Paris; from 1805 to 1811 in Washington. In 1811 he was made United States minister to France, in which character he journeyed to meet Napoleon in Russia; becoming involved in the retreat from Moscow, he died from exhaustion at a Polish village on Christmas Eve, 1812.

Though *The Columbiad* was Barlow's most serious work, his most agreeable was a comic poem entitled *The Hasty Pudding*. This, written while he was abroad in 1793, is a humorous lament that Europe lacks a delicacy of the table which, with the Atlantic between them, he remembered tenderly.

Such was the first literary efflorescence of independent America. Although it contributed nothing memorable to the wisdom of the eternities, it was an intensely spirited effort, serious in purpose even if sometimes light in form, to create a literature which should assert national independence as firmly as that independence had been asserted in politics. The result was patriotic, it was not without humor, it had all sorts of qualities of which one may speak respectfully. At best, however, it was thoroughly imitative, and at the same time full of indications that its writers lacked that peculiar fusion of thought and feeling which made English character in the eighteenth century such as could fitly be expressed by the kind of literature which the Hartford Wits so courageously attempted. An heroic, patriotic effort they stand for, made with enthusiasm, wit, and courage. Nobody can fairly hold them to blame for the fact that their America still lacked national experience ripe for expression in a form which should be distinctive.

The Hartford Wits Patriotic and Imitative.

Contemporary with the Hartford Wits was a much less

eminent man, until lately almost forgotten, whose memory is now beginning to revive. In one or two of his poems, it now seems probable, we can find more literary merit than in any other work produced in America before the nineteenth century. His name was PHILIP FRENEAU (1752–1832). He was the son of a New York wine merchant, of French-Huguenot descent. He was educated at Princeton, and having taken to the sea, was captured by the British during the Revolution and passed some time on a prison ship near New York. After the Revolution he resumed his mercantile career. In 1791 he became the editor of a very radical newspaper in Philadelphia. In 1798 he took to the sea again; and the rest of his life has no significance for us.

Philip Freneau.

Freneau was a man of strong feeling, ardently in sympathy with the Revolution, and intensely democratic. As a journalist he was a bitter opponent of any attempt on the part either of England or of the more prudent class in his own country to assert authority; and a considerable part of his poetry consists of rather reckless satire, neither better nor worse than other satire of the period. Our bare outline of his life, however, indicates one characteristic fact. The son of a New York man of business, and a graduate of Princeton, Freneau became both a practical sailor and a journalist. Now, in George III's England a man who was either scholar, sailor, or journalist was apt to be nothing else; but in America to this day such a career as Freneau's remains far from unusual. Far from unusual, too, it would have been in the England of Queen Elizabeth,—of which probably the most typical personage was Walter Ralegh, soldier, sailor, statesman, adventurer, chemist, historian, colonizer, poet, and a dozen things else. Ralegh's career was one

of unsurpassed magnificence; Freneau's in comparison seems petty. In both, however, one can see the common fact that a man whose life was intensely and variously busy found himself instinctively stirred to poetic expression.

Though the greater part of Freneau's poetry was occasional, and, however interesting historically, not of the kind which rises above the dust of the centuries, he now and then struck a note different from any which had previously been sounded in America. His most generally recognized poem, "The Indian Burying-Ground," has true beauty. In the opening thought, that it were better for the alert dead to sit than to lie drowsing, there is something really imaginative. And in the pensive melancholy with which Freneau records the rock-tracings of the vanished natives of America, there is likeness to the motive of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," which, twelve years before Freneau died, permanently enriched English literature.

Freneau expressed his motive simply, directly, and even beautifully; Keats expressed his immortally. The contrast is one between good literature and great, between the very best that America had produced in the closing years of the eighteenth century and one of the many excellent things which England produced during the first twenty years of the century which followed.

Summary. The literature produced in this country between the outbreak of the American Revolution and the close of the eighteenth century may fairly be typified, if not precisely summarized, by what we have glanced at,—the writings of those orators and public men who reached their highest expression in the *Federalist*, the conscious and imitative effort of the Hartford Wits, and the sporadic poetry of Philip Freneau.

IX

SUMMARY

We have now glanced at the literary history of America during the first two centuries of American existence. In the seventeenth century, the century of immigration, when Americans felt themselves truly to be emigrant Englishmen, they expressed themselves only in such theological and historical work as may be typified by the *Magnalia* of Cotton Mather. During the eighteenth century, the century of independence, when Americans felt themselves still Englishmen, but with no personal ties to England, America produced in literature a theology which ran to metaphysical extremes, such vigorous common sense as one finds in the varied works of Franklin, and such writings as we have glanced at since. These two centuries added to English literature the names of Shakspere, Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, Johnson, and Burns. To match these names in America we can find none more eminent than those of Cotton Mather, Edwards, Franklin, the writers of the *Federalist*, the Hartford Wits, and Freneau. As we have seen, the history of England during these two centuries was that of a steadily developing and increasing national experience. In comparison, the history of America reveals just that meagreness of artistic expression which we should expect as the result of her national inexperience.

BOOK III

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BOOK III

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I

ENGLISH HISTORY FROM 1800 TO 1900

REFERENCES

Gardiner, Chapter liii–end.

The Sovereigns.

In 1800 King George III, who had been forty years on the throne, was lapsing into that melancholy madness in which his sixty years of royalty closed. The last ten years of his reign were virtually part of his successor's, the Prince Regent, from 1820 George IV. In 1830 King William IV succeeded his brother; his reign lasted only seven years. From 1837 until January, 1901, the sovereign of England was Queen Victoria. During the nineteenth century, then, only three English sovereigns came to the throne. It chances that each of these represents a distinct phase of English history.

The Regency.

The Regency, under which general name we may for the moment include also the reign of George IV, was the time when the insular isolation of England was most pronounced. In 1798 Nelson won the battle of the Nile. No incident more definitely marks the international position of England as the chief conservative defender of such traditions as for a while seemed fatally threatened

by the French Revolution becoming incarnate in Napoleon. During the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century the conflict persisted, more and more isolating England and emphasizing English conservatism. In 1805, Trafalgar, which finally destroyed the sea power of Napoleon, made the English Channel more than ever a frontier separating England from the rest of Europe. It was not until ten years later, in 1815, that Waterloo, finally overthrowing Napoleon, made room for the reaction which overran continental Europe for thirty years to come; and only then could England begin to relax that insularity which the Napoleonic wars had so developed in English temper. England is the only country of civilized Europe where Napoleon never succeeded in planting his power; and during the first part of the nineteenth century the price which England paid for freedom from invasion was an unprecedented concentration of her own life within her own bounds. This era of dogged resistance to the French Revolution finally developed the traditional type of John Bull.

The Reform Bill, 1832.

To suppose that England remained unmoved by revolutionary fervor would nevertheless be a complete mistake. Two years after William IV ascended the throne, there occurred in English politics an incident as revolutionary as any which ever took place in France. The results of it have long since altered the whole nature of English life, social and political. Although revolutionary in purpose, however, and in ultimate effect rather more successfully revolutionary than any convulsion of continental Europe, the Reform Bill of 1832 was carried through in England by constitutional means. In brief, what happened was this. The House of Lords, the more con-

servative chamber of Parliament, was unprepared to pass the Reform Bill; the House of Commons, representing, it believed, the ardent conviction of the country, was determined that the Bill should be passed. Thereupon the King was persuaded to inform the Lords that in case they persisted in voting against the measure he should create new peers enough to make a majority of the House. This threat brought the conservative peers to terms. They did not vote for the measure, but under the leadership of the Duke of Wellington they walked out of the House in silent protest. A revolutionary threat on the part of the King had accomplished under constitutional forms a peaceful revolution.

The Victorian Era.

Five years later King William IV was dead. Then began the reign of the most tenderly human sovereign in English history. For nearly sixty-four years, in the full blaze of public life, she did unfalteringly what she deemed her duty. This devoted conscientiousness has greatly strengthened English royalty. The fact that through sixty years of growing democracy the throne of England was filled by Queen Victoria has gone far to re-establish in popular esteem a form of government which it is our fashion to call a thing of the past.

In general this Victorian era was peaceful, but still one which is best typified by the latest title of its sovereign. For during the last sixty years of the nineteenth century England was quietly asserting itself no longer as an isolated kingdom, but as a world-empire. This imperialism of England seems different from any other which has declared itself since the antique empire of Rome. It stands not for the assertion of central and despotic authority, but rather for the maintenance of government by

established custom. The English Common Law is a system not of rules, but of principles. So long as its influence was confined to the island where it was developed, to be sure, it still seemed impracticably rigid. The American Revolution, however, taught England a lesson now thoroughly learned,—that when English authority asserts itself in foreign regions, the true spirit of the Common Law should recognize and maintain all local customs which do not conflict with public good. In India, for example, local custom sanctioned many things essentially abominable,—murder, self-immolation, and the like. Such crimes against civilization the English power has condemned and repressed. Harmless local custom, on the other hand,—freedom of worship, peculiarities of land tenure, and whatever harmonizes with public order,—the English government has maintained as strenuously as in England itself it has maintained the customs peculiar to the mother country. So in Canada it has maintained a hundred forms of old French law ancestral to those provinces. So in Australia it has maintained many new systems and customs which have grown up in a colony settled since the American Revolution. Its modern state is typified by the fact that in the judicial committee of the Privy Council—whose functions resemble those of the Supreme Court of the United States—there are now regularly members from Canada, from India, from Australia, to pronounce in this court of appeal on questions referred to the mother country from parts of the empire where the actual law differs from that of England herself.

The Common Law in the Colonies.

The Victorian epoch, then, has begun to explain the true spirit of the English law: whatever the letter, this spirit maintains that throughout the empire, and all the

places where the imperial influence extends, the whole force of England shall sustain the differing rights and traditions which have proved themselves, for the regions where they have grown, sound, safe, and favorable to civilized prosperity.

Historically, to sum up, England began the nineteenth century as an isolated conservative power. In the reign of King William IV it underwent a revolution which its ancestral legal forms proved strong and flexible enough to accomplish without convulsion or bloodshed; and during the long reign of Queen Victoria it more and more widely asserted the imperial dominion of the flexibly vital traditions of our Common Law. **Summary.**

II

ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM 1800 TO 1900

References

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So we come to the literature of England during the nineteenth century. By chance several dates which we have named for other purposes are significant also in literary history. In 1798, when Nelson fought the battle of the Nile, Wordsworth and Coleridge published their famous *Lyrical Ballads*, the first important expression of the revived romantic spirit in English literature. In 1832, the year of the Reform Bill, Scott died; Byron, Shelley, and Keats were already dead; so was Miss Austen; and every literary reputation contemporary with theirs was finally established.

From the Lyrical Ballads to the death of Scott.

The period of English literature which began with the *Lyrical Ballads* and ended with the death of Scott may be roughly divided at 1815, the year of Waterloo. The chief expression which preceded this was a passionate outburst of romantic poetry, maintaining in widely various forms the revolutionary principle that human beings left to themselves may be trusted to tend toward righteousness; and that sin, evil, and pain are brought into being by those distortions of human nature which are wrought by outworn custom and superstition. Though this philosophy may never have been precisely or fully set forth by any one of the English poets who flourished between 1800 and 1815,

it pervades the work of all; and this work taken together is the most memorable body of poetry in our language, except the Elizabethan. So far as one can now tell, this school distinguishes itself from the Elizabethan, and from almost any other of equal merit in literary history, by the fact that the passionate devotion of these new poets to the ideal of freedom in both thought and phrase made them almost as different from one another as the poets of the eighteenth century were alike. For all this, as one reads them now, one perceives a trait common throughout their work. Despite the fervor of their revolutionary individualism, Wordsworth and Coleridge and Byron and Shelley and the rest agreed eagerly in looking forward to an enfranchised future in which this world was to be far better than in the tyrant-ridden past. This was the dominant sentiment of English literature from the battle of the Nile to that of Waterloo.

The Waverley Novels.

Between Waterloo and the Reform Bill, a new phase of feeling dominated the literature of England. Though something of this elder spirit of hope lingered, the most considerable fact was the publication of all but the first two of the Waverley Novels. The contrast between these and the preceding poetry is impressive. What gave them popularity and has assured them permanence is the fervor with which they retrospectively assert the beauty of ideals which even in their own time were almost extinct. The first outburst of English literature in the nineteenth century was a poetry animated by aspiration toward an ideal future; the second phase of that literature, expressed by the novels of Sir Walter Scott, dwelt in carelessly dignified prose on the nobler aspects of a real past.

These two phases of English literature roughly cor-

Victorian Literature.

respond with the Regency and the reign of William IV. The literature which has ensued will probably be known to the future as Victorian; and it is still too near us for any confident generalization. But although there has been admirable Victorian poetry, of which the most eminent makers are now thought to have been Tennyson and the Brownings; and although serious Victorian prose, of which perhaps the most eminent makers were Ruskin and Carlyle, has seemed of paramount interest, posterity will probably find the most characteristic feature of Victorian literature to have been fiction. It is almost literally to the reign of Queen Victoria that we owe the whole work of Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and the numberless lesser novelists and story-tellers whose books have been the chief reading of the English-speaking world, down to the days of Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling.

Broadly speaking, we may accordingly say that up to the time of the Reform Bill the English literature of the nineteenth century expressed itself first in that body of aspiring poetry which seems the most memorable English utterance since Elizabethan times, and secondly in those novels of Sir Walter Scott, which, dealing romantically with the past, indicate the accomplishment of a world revolution; and that since the Reform Bill decidedly the most popular phase of English literature has been prose fiction dealing with contemporary life.

Slight as this sketch of English literature in the nineteenth century has been, it is sufficient for our purpose, which is only to remind ourselves of what occurred in England during the century when something which we may fairly call literature developed in America.

III

AMERICAN HISTORY FROM 1800 TO 1900

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Amid the constant growth of democracy, amid practical assertion of the power which resides in the uneducated classes, and which our Constitution made conscious, our national life began with bewildering confusion. To the better classes, embodied in the old Federalist party, this seemed anarchical; the election of Jefferson (1800) they honestly believed to portend the final overthrow of law and order. Instead of that, one can see now, it really started our persistent progress. Among the early incidents of this progress was the purchase of Louisiana, which finally established the fact that the United States were to dominate the North American continent. So complete, indeed, has our occupation of this continent become that it is hard to remember how in 1800 the United States, at least so far as they were settled, were almost comprised between the Alleghanies and the Atlantic. In less than one hundred years we have colonized, and to a considerable

Expansion.

degree civilized, the vast territory now under our undisputed control.

Our expansion began with the purchase of Louisiana. Nine years later, under President Madison, came that second war with England which, while unimportant in English history, was very important in ours. The War of 1812 asserted our independent nationality, our ability to maintain ourselves against a foreign enemy, and, above all, our fighting power on the sea. The War of 1812, besides, did much to revive and strengthen the Revolutionary conviction that England must always be our natural enemy. Before that war broke out there were times when conflict seemed almost as likely to arise with France. It was an incident, we can now see, of that death-grapple wherein England was maintaining against Napoleonic Europe those traditions of Common Law which we share with her. America had felt the arbitrary insolence of Napoleon, as well as that of England; neutrality proved impossible. We chanced to take arms once more against the mother country. Thereby, whatever we gained,—and surely our strengthened national integrity is no small blessing,—we certainly emphasized and prolonged our Revolutionary misunderstanding.

The Monroe Doctrine.

The next critical fact in our history was the assertion in 1823 of the Monroe Doctrine. In brief, this declares that the chief political power in America is the United States; and that any attempt on the part of a foreign power to establish colonies in America, or to interfere with the governments already established there, will be regarded by the United States as an unfriendly act. This declaration has generally been respected. Except for the transitory empire of Maximilian in Mexico, the integrity of the

American continent has been respected since President Monroe's famous message.

The Civil War.

During the next thirty-five years developed that inevitable national disunion which culminated in the Civil War of 1861. The economic and social systems of North and of South were radically different: generation by generation they naturally bred men less and less able to understand each other. The Southerners of the fifties were far more like their revolutionary ancestors than were the Northerners. General Washington and General Lee, for example, have many more points of resemblance than have President Washington and President Lincoln; and Lee was really as typically Southern in his time as Lincoln in those same days was typically Northern. The Civil War involved deep moral questions, concerning the institution of slavery and national union; but on those moral questions North and South honestly differed. What ultimately makes the War so heroic a tradition is the fact that on both sides men ardently gave their lives for what they believed to be the truth. The conflict was truly irrepressible; the two sections of our country had developed in ways so divergent that nothing but force could prevent disunion.

Disunion did not ensue. Instead of it, after a troubled interval, has come a union constantly stronger. Our history since the Civil War is too recent for confident generalization. Two or three of its features, however, are growing salient. Long before the Civil War certain phases of material prosperity had begun to develop in this country,—the great cotton-growing of the South, for one thing, and for another, the manufactures of New England. Since the Civil War some similar economic facts have produced

marked changes in our national equilibrium. One has been the opening of the great lines of transcontinental railway. Along with these has developed the enormous growth of bread-stuffs throughout the West, together with incalculable increase of our mineral wealth. These causes have effected the complete settlement of our national territory. At the close of the Civil War a great part of the country between the Mississippi and California remained virtually unappropriated. At present almost every available acre of it is in private ownership. Our continent is finally settled. Such freedom as our more adventurous spirits used to find in going West they must now find, if at all, in emigrating, like our English cousins, to regions not politically under our control. There they must face a serious question. Shall they submit themselves in these foreign places where their active lives must pass, to legal and political systems foreign to their own; or shall they assert in those regions the legal and political principles which the fact of their ancestral language makes them believe more admirable?

Reunion; Development of the West.

So for the first time since the settlement of Virginia and New England we come to a point where the history of England and that of America assume similar aspects. For nearly three centuries the national experience of England and the national inexperience of America have tended steadily to diverge. Now the growing similarity of the problems which confront both countries suggests that in years to come we may understand each other better.

IV

LITERATURE IN AMERICA FROM 1800 TO 1900

It is only during this nineteenth century, as we have seen, that literature in America has advanced to a point where it deserves detached study. By chance its various phases, though not exactly like those of contemporary English literature, fall into chronologic groups very like those which we noted in the literature of the mother country. During the first thirty years of this century the chief development of literature in America took place in the Middle States, centring—as the life of the Middle States tended more and more to centre—in the city of New York. The literary prominence of this region roughly corresponds with those years between 1798 and 1832 which produced the poets of the Regency and the "Waverley Novels." Meanwhile, as we shall see later, New England, which for a century past had been less conspicuous in American intellectual life than at the beginning, was gathering the strength which finally expressed itself in the most important literature hitherto produced in our country. Broadly speaking, this literature was contemporary with the Victorian. In 1837, when the Queen came to the throne, it was hardly in existence; before 1881, when George Eliot, the third of the great Victorian novelists, died, it was virtually complete. To-day it may be regarded as a thing of the past. What has succeeded it is

too recent for detailed treatment; yet we must give ourselves some account of it. In the chapters to come, then, we shall consider these three literary epochs in turn: first, the prominence of the Middle States; next, the Renaissance of New England; and, finally, what has followed.

BOOK IV

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE STATES FROM 1798 TO 1857

BOOK IV

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE STATES FROM 1798 TO 1857

I

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

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Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810) was born in Philadelphia, of Quaker parentage. For a while he studied law, but at the age of about twenty-five he turned to letters. Before 1796 he had contributed essays to the *Columbus Magazine;* in 1797 he published a work on marriage and divorce entitled *The Dialogue of Alcuin.* In the following year, the year of the *Lyrical Ballads*, he produced his first novel, *Wieland*, which had popular success. Within six years he had published five other novels: *Ormond*, 1799; *Arthur Mervyn*, 1799–1800; *Edgar Hunt-* **Life.**

ley, 1801; *Clara Howard*, 1801; and *Jane Talbot*, 1804. Meanwhile, in 1799, he had become editor of the *Monthly Magazine and American Review*, which lasted only a few months. For five years after 1803 he edited *The Literary Magazine and American Register.* The greater part of his literary life was passed in New York.

Brown's mature years came during that period, between the Revolution and the War of 1812, when the American feeling of national independence was strongest. For the first time Europeans were becoming aware that America existed. Native Americans were consequently possessed by an impulse to declare to all mankind, and particularly to Europeans, that Americans are a race of remarkable merit. This impulse is clearly evident in the works of Brown; it is more so still in the books which Dunlap and Prescott wrote about him.

Contemporary Estimates of Brown.

These biographers were disposed not only to speak of him in superlative terms, but also to maintain as his chief claim to eminence that his work, being purely American, must be thoroughly original.

The most cursory glance at Brown's English contemporaries should have reminded his biographers that no claim could be much worse founded. During the last ten years of the eighteenth century, English prose literature was not particularly rich. Among its most conspicuous phases was a kind of darkly romantic novel, which prob-

ably reached its highest development in Germany. Half a century before, English fiction had produced masterpieces,—*Clarissa Harlowe*, for example, *Tom Jones*, *Tristram Shandy*, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Between 1790 and 1800 English fiction was in that apparently decadent condition manifested by such books as Lewis's *Monk* (1795), Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and Godwin's more significant *Caleb Williams* (1794).

Godwin's Influence upon Brown.

Were there no direct evidence that Brockden Brown was consciously influenced by Godwin, the fact might be inferred from the general character of his style; but Brown's own words assert that he deliberately made Godwin his model:

> "What is the nature or merit of my performance? . . . When a mental comparison is made between this and the mass of novels, I am inclined to be pleased with my own production. But when the objects of comparison are changed, and I revolve the transcendent merits of Caleb Williams, my pleasure is diminished, and is preserved from a total extinction only by the reflection that this performance is the first."*

Brown's Originality.

Yet, although Brown followed Godwin in matters of political philosophy, he struck out for himself in one point: he aimed to depart from the Lewis and Radcliffe school by making his backgrounds American and by using incidents which had actually happened or might happen, in America, instead of the haunted castles of his English predecessors. This intention he makes explicit in the preface to *Edgar Huntley:*

> ". . . One merit the writer may at least claim—that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader by

* Dunlap's Life of Brown, I, 107.

means hitherto unemployed. . . . Puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the Western wilderness are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology. These, therefore, are in part, the ingredients of this tale, and these he has been ambitious of depicting in vivid and faithful colours. The success of his efforts must be estimated by the liberal and candid reader."

Wieland.

One's first impression is that, with this rather important exception of background and the general character of the incident, Brown's novels are merely imitative. After a while, however, one begins to feel, beneath his imitation, a touch of something individual. In *Wieland* the hero is a gentleman of Philadelphia, who in the midst of almost ideal happiness is suddenly accosted by a mysterious voice which orders him to put to death his superhumanly perfect wife and children. The mysterious voice, which pursues him through increasing horror, declares itself to be that of God. At last, driven to madness by this appalling visitant, Wieland murders his family. To this point, in spite of confusion and turgidity, the story has power. The end is ludicrously weak; the voice of God turns out to have been merely the trick of a malignant ventriloquist. The triviality of this catastrophe tends to make you feel as if all the preceding horrors had been equally trivial. Really this is not the case. The chapters in which the mind of Wieland is gradually possessed by delusion could have been written only by one who had genuinely felt a sense of what hideously mysterious things may lie beyond human ken. Some such sense as this, in terribly serious form, haunted the imagination of Puritans. In a meretricious

form it appears in the work of Poe. In a form alive with beauty it reveals itself throughout the melancholy romances of Hawthorne. In Poe's work and in Hawthorne's it is handled with mastery, and few men of letters have been much further from mastery of their art than Charles Brockden Brown; but the sense of horror which Brown expressed in *Wieland* is genuine. To feel its power you need only compare it with the similar feeling expressed in Lewis's *Monk*, in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, or even in *Caleb Williams* itself.

In two of Brown's later novels, *Ormond* (1799) and *Arthur Mervyn* (1799–1800) there are touches more directly from life which show another kind of power. Among his most poignant personal experiences was the terrible fact of epidemic yellow fever. In both *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* there are descriptions of this pestilence almost as powerful as Defoe's descriptions of the London plague. This power of setting his scenes in a vividly real background appears again in *Edgar Huntley*. The incidents of this story are unimportant except as they carry a somnambulist into the woods and caves of the Pennsylvanian country. These, despite some theatrically conventional touches, are almost as real as the somnambulist is false. Such incongruities cannot blend harmoniously; Brown's incessant combination of reality in nature with unreality in character produces an effect of bewildering confusion.

Vivid Backgrounds in Brown's Novels.

Nor is this confusion in Brown's novels wholly a matter of conception. Few writers anywhere seem at first more hopelessly to lack constructive power. Take *Arthur Mervyn*, for example: the story begins in the first person; the narrator meets somebody in whose past history he is interested; thereupon the second personage begins to

His Plots.

narrate his own past, also in the first person; in the course of this narrative a third character appears, who soon proceeds to begin a third autobiography; and so on. As one who is bewildered by this confusion, however, pauses to unravel it, a significant fact appears. Whoever tries to write fiction must soon discover one of his most difficult problems to be the choice and maintenance of a definite point of view. To secure one, this device of assuming the first person is as old as the Odyssey, where Odysseus narrates so many experiences to the king of the Phæacians. In brief, a resort to this world-old device generally indicates a conscious effort to get material into manageable form. These inextricable tangles of autobiography, which make Brockden Brown's construction appear so formless, probably arose from an impotent sense that form ought to be striven for; and, indeed, when any one of his autobiographic episodes is taken by itself it will generally be found pretty satisfactory.

His Style.

When we come to the technical question of style, too, the simple test of reading aloud will show that Brockden Brown's sense of form was unusual. Of course his work shows many of the careless faults inevitable when men write with undue haste. His vocabulary is certainly turgid; and consciously trying to write effectively, he often wrote absurdly; but his ear was true. If you read him aloud, you will find your voice dwelling where the sense requires it to dwell.

Brockden Brown's novels may be held to mark the beginning of literature in America. It is noteworthy, accordingly, that the literature of America begins exactly where the pure literature of a normally developed language

Summary: Brown's Sense of Mystery and Sense of Form.

is apt to leave off. A great literature, originating from the heart of the people, declares itself first in spontaneous songs and ballads and legends; it is apt to end in prose fiction. With labored and imitative prose fiction our American literature begins. This labored prose fiction of Brown has traits, however, which distinguish it from similar work in England. To begin with, the sense of horror which permeates it is not conventional but genuine. Brockden Brown could instinctively feel, more deeply than almost any native Englishman since the days of Elizabeth, what mystery may lurk just beyond human ken. In the second place, Brown's work, for all its apparent confusion, proves confused chiefly by a futile attempt to fix his point of view through autobiographic devices. In the third place, he reveals on almost every page an instinctive sense of rhythmical form.

Brown's six novels are rather long, and all are hastily written. In his short, invalid life he never attempted any other form of fiction. As one considers his work, however, one may well incline to guess that if he had confined his attempts to single episodes,—if he had had the originality to invent the short story,—he might have done work comparable with that of Irving or Poe or even Hawthorne. Brockden Brown, in brief, never stumbled on the one literary form which he might have mastered; pretty clearly that literary form was the sort of romantic short story whose motive is mysterious; and since his time that kind of short story has proved itself the most characteristic phase of native American fiction.

II

WASHINGTON IRVING

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Life.

The name of Washington Irving (1783–1859) reminds us rather startlingly how short is the real history of American letters. Although he has been dead for decidedly more than forty years, many people still remember him personally; and when in 1842 he went as President Tyler's minister to Spain, he passed through an England where Queen Victoria had already been five years on the throne. Yet this Irving, who has hardly faded from living memory, may in one sense be called, more certainly than Brockden Brown, the first American man of letters. He was the first whose work has remained popular; and the first, too, who

was born after the Revolution, which made native Americans no longer British subjects but citizens of the United States. His parents, to be sure, were foreign, his father Scotch, his mother English; but he himself was born in New York. He was not very strong; his education was consequently irregular; he read law languidly; and at the age of twenty-one he was sent abroad for his health. There he remained two years.

In 1806, Irving returned home; the next year, in company with William Irving and James Kirke Paulding, he began writing a series of essays called *Salmagundi** (1807-1808). Only his subsequent eminence has preserved from oblivion these conventional survivals of the eighteenth century. About this time he fell in love with a young girl whose death at seventeen almost broke his heart. When she died he was at her bedside; and throughout his later life he could not bear to hear her name mentioned. The tender melancholy in so many of his writings was probably due to this bereavement. Salmagundi.

In 1809 he published his first important book—the "Knickerbocker" *History of New York.*† Shortly thereafter he devoted himself to business; and in 1815 he went abroad in connection with his affairs. There, after a few years, commercial misfortune overtook him. In 1819 and 1820 he brought out his *Sketch Book;* from that time forth he was a professional man of letters. He remained abroad until 1832, spending the years between 1826 and 1829 in Spain, and those between 1829 and 1832

*In cookery, *salmagundi* is a dish "consisting of chopped meats, eggs, anchovies, onions, oil, etc."; applied to literature, it means a collection of miscellaneous essays.

†The title is *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty * * * By Diedrich Knickerbocker.*

as Secretary to the American Legation in London. Coming home, he resided for six or seven years at Tarrytown on the Hudson, in that house, "Sunnyside," which has become associated with his name. From 1842 to 1846 he was Minister to Spain. He then finally returned home, crowning his literary work with his *Life of Washington*, of which the first volume appeared in 1855, and the last—the fifth—in the year of his death, 1859.

Irving was the first American man of letters to attract wide attention abroad. His Knickerbocker History was favorably received by contemporary England; and the *Sketch Book* and *Bracebridge Hall*, which followed it in 1822, were from the beginning what they have remained,

Four Classes of his Work.

—as popular in England as they have been in his native country. The same, on the whole, is true of his writings about Spain; and, to a somewhat slighter degree, of his *Life of Oliver Goldsmith* (1840), and his *Life of Washington*. The four general classes of work here mentioned followed one another in fairly distinct succession through his half-century of literary life. We may perhaps get our clearest notion of him by considering them in turn.

Comic History.

The Knickerbocker History has properly lasted. The origin of this book resembles that of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* some twenty-five years later. Both began as burlesques and ended as independent works of fic-

tion, retaining of their origin little more trace than occasional extravagance. In 1807 Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill had published *A Picture of New York*, ridiculous, even among works of its time, for ponderous pretentiousness. The book had such success, however, that Irving and his brother were moved to write a parody of it. Presently Irving's brother went abroad, leaving the work to

Origin and Purpose of the Knickerbocker History.

SUNNYSIDE, IRVING'S HOME AT TARRYTOWN

Irving himself. The "Author's Apology" prefixed to the Knickerbocker History tells how, as he wrote on, his style and purpose underwent a change. Instead of burlesquing Mitchill, he found himself composing a comic history of old New York, and incidentally introducing a good deal of personal and political satire, now as forgotten as that which lies neglected in "Gulliver's Travels." His style, which began in deliberately ponderous imitation of Dr. Mitchill's, passed almost insensibly into one of considerable freedom, so evidently modelled on that of eighteenth-century England as to seem like some skilful bit

of English writing during the generation which preceded the American Revolution. The substance of the book, however, is distinctly different from what was then usual in England.

Its Method.

Assuming throughout the character of Diedrich Knickerbocker, an eccentric old bachelor who typifies the decaying Dutch families of New York, Irving mingles with many actual facts of colonial history all manner of unbridled extravagance. The governors and certain other of his personages are historical; the wars with New Englanders are historical wars; and historical, too, is the profound distaste for Yankee character which Irving needed no assumed personality to feel. But throughout there mingles with these historical facts the wildest sort of sportive nonsense. Wouter Van Twiller, to take a casual example, was an authentic Dutch governor of New Amsterdam; and here is the way in which Irving writes about him:—

"In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge chair of solid oak, hewn in the celebrated forest of the Hague, fabricated by an experienced timmerman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet, into exact imitations of gigantic eagle's claws. Instead of a sceptre he swayed a long Turkish pipe, wrought with jasmin and amber, which had been presented to a stadtholder of Holland, at the conclusion of a treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers. In this stately chair would he sit, and this magnificent pipe would he smoke, shaking his right knee with a constant motion, and fixing his eye for hours together upon a little print of Amsterdam, which hung in a black frame against the opposite wall of the council chamber. Nay, it has even been said that when any deliberation of extraordinary length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would shut his eyes for full two hours at a time, that he might not be disturbed by external objects—and at such times the internal commotion of his mind was evinced by

certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict, made by his contending doubts and opinions."*

More than possibly the chair here mentioned was some real chair which Irving had seen and in which an old Dutch governor might have sat. Conceivably the Turkish pipe may have been at least legendarily true. The rest of the passage is utter extravagance; yet you will be at a little pains to say just where fact passes into nonsense.

Though this kind of humor is not unprecedented, one thing about it is worth attention. When we were considering the work of Franklin, we found in his letter to a London newspaper concerning the state of the American colonies a grave mixture of fact and nonsense, remarkably like the American humor of our later days. In Irving's Knickerbocker History we find something very similar. The fun of the thing lies in frequent and often imperceptible lapses from sense to nonsense and back again. This deliberate confusion of sense and nonsense, in short, proves generally characteristic of American humor; and although the formal amenity of Irving's style often makes him seem rather an imitator of the eighteenth-century English writers than a native American, one can feel that if the Knickerbocker History and Franklin's letter could be reduced to algebraic formulæ, these formulæ would pretty nearly coincide. The temper of the Knickerbocker History, may, accordingly, be regarded as freshly American. The style, meanwhile, is rather like that of Goldsmith. When the Knickerbocker History was published, Goldsmith had been dead for thirty-five years. In Irving we find a man who used the traditional style

Its Humor.

* Bk. iii, chap. i.

of eighteenth-century England for a purpose foreign at once to the century and the country of its origin.

It was ten years before Irving again appeared as a serious man of letters. Then came the *Sketch Book*, which contains his best-known stories, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." The book is a collection of essays and short stories, written in a style more like Goldsmith's than ever. The year in which it appeared was that which gave to England the first two cantos of Byron's *Don Juan*, Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* and *Legend of Montrose*, Shelley's *Cenci*, and Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*. There can be little doubt that in formal style the *Sketch Book* is more conscientious than any of these. Its prose, in fact, has hardly been surpassed, if indeed it has been equalled, in nineteenth-century England. This prose, however, is of that balanced, cool, rhythmical sort which was at its best in England during the mid years of the eighteenth century.

Essays and Short Stories.

In the *Sketch Book* there are many papers and passages which might have come straight from some of the later eighteenth-century essayists. On the other hand, there are many passages, such as are most familiar in "Rip Van Winkle," which could hardly have appeared in Goldsmith's England. Though Goldsmith's England was becoming sentimental, it never got to that delight in a romantic past which characterized the period of Sir Walter Scott. By 1819, however, Scott had attained his highest development. His work is far more passionate and profound than are the romantic stories of Irving; in technical form, on the other hand, it is comparatively careless, nor on the whole is it more genuinely permeated with the romantic senti-

ment of the nineteenth century. The story of Rip Van Winkle, for example, is a legend which exists in various European forms. Whether Irving adapted it from such old German tales as that of the sleeping Barbarossa, or from some Spanish story of enchanted Moors, or whether in his time the legend itself had migrated to the Hudson Valley, makes no difference. He assumed that it belonged in the Catskills. He placed it, as a little earlier Brockden Brown placed his less important romances, in a real background; and he infused into it the romantic spirit already characteristic of European letters, which was soon to be almost more so of our own. He enlivened the tale, meanwhile, with a subdued form of such humor as runs riot in the Knickerbocker History; and all this modern sentiment he phrased, as he had phrased his first book, in the terms of Goldsmith's time. The peculiar trait of the *Sketch Book* is this combination of fresh romantic feeling with traditional Augustan style.

The Peculiar Trait of the Sketch Book.

The passages of the *Sketch Book* which deal with England reveal so sympathetic a sense of old English tradition that some of them, like those concerning Stratford and Westminster Abbey, have become classical; just as Irving's later work, *Bracebridge Hall*, is now generally admitted to typify a pleasant phase of English country life almost as well as Sir Roger de Coverley typified another, a century earlier. There are papers in the *Sketch Book*, however, which for us are more significant. Take those, for example, on "John Bull" and on "English Writers Concerning America." Like the writing of Hopkinson at the time of the American Revolution, these reveal a distinct sense on the part of an able and cultivated American that the contemporary English differ from our countrymen.

Bracebridge Hall (1822) and the *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), which followed the *Sketch Book*, resemble it in character. Irving's most noteworthy feat in all three books is that he made prominent in English literature a form in which for a long time to come Americans excelled native Englishmen,—the short story. Certainly until the time of Robert Louis Stevenson, no English-speaking writer out of America had produced many short stories of such merit as Hawthorne's and Poe's and Irving's. In this fact there is something akin to that other fact which we have just remarked,—the formal superiority of Irving's style to that of contemporary Englishmen. A good short story must generally be more careful in form than a novel. Now, during the nineteenth century American men of letters have usually had a more conscious sense of form than their English contemporaries. The artistic conscience revealed in the finish of Irving's style and in his mastery of the short story may accordingly be called characteristic of his country.

Books on Spain.

Equally characteristic of America, in the somewhat different manner foreshadowed by *Bracebridge Hall* and the *Tales of a Traveller*, are the series of Irving's writings, between 1828 and 1832, which deal with Spain. He was first attracted thither by a proposition that he should translate a Spanish book concerning Columbus. Instead of so doing, he ended by writing his *History of the Life and Times of Christopher Columbus* (1828), which was followed by *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Alhambra* (1832). For Americans, Spain has sometimes had more romantic charm than all the rest of Europe put together. In the first place, as the very name of Columbus should remind us, its history is

inextricably connected with our own. In the second place, at just the moment when this lasting connection between Spain and the New World declared itself, the eight hundred years' struggle between Moors and Spaniards had at length ended in the triumph of the Christians; and no other conflict of the whole European past involved a contrast of life and of ideals more vivid, more complete, more varied, or more prolonged. In the third place, the stagnation of Spain began almost immediately; so in the early nineteenth century Spain had altered less since 1492 than any other part of Europe. Elsewhere an American traveller could find traces of the picturesque, romantic, vanished past. In Spain he could find a state of life so little changed from olden time that he seemed almost to travel into that vanished past itself.

Irving's Delight in the Past.

Now, as the American character of the nineteenth century has declared itself, few of its æsthetic traits are more marked than eager delight in olden splendors. Such delight, of course, has characterized the nineteenth century in Europe as well as among ourselves. A modern Londoner, however, who can walk in a forenoon from Westminster Abbey to the Temple Church and so to the Tower, can never dream what such monuments mean to an imagination which has grown up amid no grander relics of antiquity than King's Chapel or Independence Hall. Americans can still feel the romance even of modern London or Paris; and to this day there is no spot where our starved craving for picturesque traces of a human past can be more profusely satisfied than in Spain. No words have ever expressed this satisfaction more sincerely or more spontaneously than the fantastic stories of old Spain which Irving has left us.

Biography.

His later work was chiefly biographical. Both his *Goldsmith* and his *Washington* are written with all his charm and with vivid imagination. Irving, however, was no trained scholar. He was far even from the critical habit of the New England historians, and further still from such learning as now makes our best history something like exact science. He was almost as anxious to write harmingly as to write truly; but in itself this desire was beautifully true. Throughout Irving wrote as well as he could, and he knew how to write better than almost any contemporary Englishman.

Summary.

Our hasty glance at Irving's literary career has shown what this first American who established a lasting European reputation really accomplished. His greatest merits are artistic conscience and purity of style. If we ask ourselves, however, what he used his style to express, we find in the first place a quaintly extravagant humor growing more delicate with the years; next we find romantic sentiment set forth in the literary manner of a past English generation whose temper had been not romantic, but classical; then we find a deep delight in the splendors of a romantic past; and finally we come to pleasantly vivid romantic biographies. Clearly Irving had no message; he was animated by no profound sense of the mystery of existence. All he did was to set forth delicate, refined, romantic sentiment in delicate, refined, classic style.

This was the first recognized literary revelation of the New World to the Old. In a previous generation, Edwards had made American theology a fact for all Calvinists to reckon with. The political philosophers of the Revolution had made our political and legal thought matters

which even the Old World could hardly neglect. When we come to pure literature, however, in which America should at last express to Europe what life meant to men of artistic sensitiveness living under the conditions of our new and emancipated society, what we find is little more than greater delicacy of form than existed in contemporary England. Irving is certainly a permanent literary figure. What makes him so is not novelty or power, but charming refinement.

III

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

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IN 1820, American literature, so far as it has survived, consisted of the novels of Brockden Brown, then ten years dead, and of Irving's *Sketch Book*, which had begun to appear the year before. Apart from these works, what had been produced in this country was obviously so imitative as to express only a sense on the part of our numerous writers that they ought to copy the eminent authors of England. In 1820 appeared the first work of a new novelist, soon to attain not only permanent reputation in America, but also general European recognition. This was JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789–1851).

Life. He was born in New Jersey. When he was about a year old his father, a gentleman of means, migrated to that region in Central New York where Cooperstown still preserves his name. Here the father founded the settlement where for the rest of his life he main-

tained a position of almost feudal superiority. Here, in a country so wild as to be almost primeval, Cooper was brought up. Before he was fourteen years old he went to Yale College; but some academic trouble brought his career there to a premature end. The years between 1806 and 1810 he spent at sea, first on a merchant vessel, afterwards as an officer in the navy. In 1811, having married a lady of the Tory family of De Lancey, he resigned his commission.

After several years of inconspicuous life—he was living at the time in the country near New York City—he read some now forgotten English novel; and stirred by the notion that he could write a better, he rapidly produced the novel *Precaution* (1820). This was a tale of life in England, of which at the time Cooper knew very little. It had a measure of success, being mistaken for the anonymous work of some English woman of fashion. In the following year Cooper produced *The Spy*, an historical novel of the American Revolution, then less than fifty years past. In 1823 came *The Pioneers*, the first in publication of his Leather-Stocking tales; and just at the beginning of 1824 appeared *The Pilot*, the first of his stories of the sea. *The Last of the Mohicans*, perhaps his masterpiece, was published in 1826. In that year he went abroad, where he remained for seven years. He then came home, and thereafter resided mostly on the ancestral estate at Cooperstown. Peculiarities of temper kept him throughout his later years in chronic quarrels with the public, with his neighbors, and with almost everybody but some of his personal friends, who remained strongly attached to him.

His First Novel.

At the age of thirty, as we have seen, Cooper had never

published anything; he died at the age of sixty-two having written some ninety volumes. Of these hastily written works a number dealt with matters of fact; for one thing, with characteristic asperity and lack of tact, he published various comments on both America and England, in which he seemed chiefly animated by a desire to emphasize those truths which would be least welcome to the people concerned. He wrote, too, a *History of the Navy of the United States of America* (1839), which contributed to his personal difficulties.

Most of these contentious works, however, were published after 1832. Between 1820 and 1832, meantime, Cooper had produced at least ten novels which have held their position in literature. What is more, these novels almost immediately attained world-wide reputation; they were translated not only into French, but also into many other languages of continental Europe, in which they preserve popularity. Great as was his success at home and in England, indeed, it is sometimes said to have been exceeded by that which he has enjoyed throughout continental Europe.

Popularity of his Novels.

This great success is perhaps summarized in the fact that Cooper has been called the American Scott, and indeed was so called in his own time, for his reputation was literally contemporary with Sir Walter's. *The Spy* ap-

peared in the same year with *Kenilworth* and *The Pirate*, *The Pilot* in the year of *Quentin Durward*. Scott and Cooper, however, really belong to different categories of merit. Scott, saturated with the traditions of a brave old human world, was gifted with an imagination so robust as to have invented in the historical novel a virtually new form of literature, and to have enlivened it with a host of characters so vital that among the creatures of English imagination his personages rank almost next to Shakspere's. When Cooper began to write, *Waverley* was already about six years old. In a certain sense he may therefore be said to have imitated Scott; it is doubtful, however, whether he was by any means so conscious of his model as Brockden Brown was of Godwin, or Irving of Goldsmith. The resemblance between Cooper and Scott lies chiefly in the fact that each did his best work in fiction dealing with the romantic past of his own country. By just so much, then, as the past of Cooper's America was a slighter, less varied, less human past than that of Scott's England or Scotland, Cooper's work must remain inferior to Scott's in human interest. Partly for the same reason, the range of character created by Cooper is far less wide than that brought into being by Sir Walter. Cooper, indeed, as the very difficulties of his later life would show, was temperamentally narrow in sympathy. To compare him with Scott, indeed, except for the matter of popularity, in which they have often been equal, is needlessly to belittle Cooper. Here we may better consider him in connection with his American contemporaries.

Cooper and Scott.

When *The Spy* was published, the novels of Brockden Brown were already almost forgotten; and Irving had produced only *The Knickerbocker History* and the admir-

able essays of his *Sketch Book*. *The Spy* is an historical novel of the American Revolution, often conventional, but at the same time set in a vivid background; for Cooper, actually living in the country where he laid his scenes, sincerely endeavored not only to revive the fading past, but to do full justice to both sides in that great conflict which disunited the English-speaking races. In *The Pilot* we have a somewhat similar state of things; but here, instead of laying the scene on American soil, Cooper lays it for the first time in literature aboard an American ship. *The Pilot* is very uneven. The plot is conventionally trivial; and most of the characters are more so still. But Long Tom Coffin is a living Yankee sailor; and when we come to the sea, with its endless variety of weather, and to sea-fights, such as that between the "Ariel" and the "Alacrity," it would be hard to find anything better. If the plot and the characters had been half so good as the wonderful marine background in which they are set, the book would have been a masterpiece.

Cooper's Backgrounds.

Something similar may be said of the Leather-Stocking stories,* of which *The Last of the Mohicans*, published in 1826, is probably the best. The trivially conventional plots concern characters who, with the exception of Leatherstocking himself, are not particularly like anything recorded in human history. The woods and the inland waters, on the other hand, amid which the scenes of these stories unroll themselves, are true American forests and lakes and streams. It is hardly too much to say that Cooper introduced certain aspects of Nature

* These are, in their order as successive chapters in the life of their hero: *The Deerslayer* (1841); *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826); *The Pathfinder* (1840); *The Pioneers* (1823); *The Prairie* (1827).

unknown to literature before his time, and of a kind which could have been perceived and set forth only by an enthusiastic native of that newest of nations to which he was so devotedly attached.

Cooper's Asperity

Though Cooper thoroughly loved his country, he saw in it traits which by no means delighted him. So in his *Notions of the Americans Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor*, published in 1828, when his popularity was at its height, he expressed concerning our countrymen views which may be summarized in the statement that Americans, though full of energy and other admirable qualities, have a blind passion for money-seeking, an undue respect for popular opinion, and an irrepressible tendency to brag. For this he was called Anglomaniac; his Anglomania, however, did not prevent him from writing just as frankly about the English, of whom his published views may similarly be summarized in the statement that the English are not only the most efficiently powerful nation in the world, but also by far the most snobbish. Both nations resented these comments by bestowing upon Cooper in reputable reviews such epithets as "superlative dolt," "bilious braggart," "liar," "full jackass," "insect," "grub," and "reptile."

The troubles in which he thus involved himself during his last twenty years were enhanced not only by those which sprang from his honest effort to be fair in his History of the Navy, but by quarrels with neighbors at Cooperstown, concerning the public use of some land to which he held a clear title, and by various infirmities of temper. Intensely aristocratic in personal feeling, he cherished the most democratic general sentiments, believing equally in the rights of man and in the vileness of any actual populace.

In politics he was a Democrat, but he hated free trade as blindly as Tory squire ever loved the Corn Laws. One can begin to see why he wished no biography made of what he must have felt to be a life of misunderstanding and vexation.

Summary. Yet, now that he has been half a century in his grave, little memory is left of his foibles or his troubles. The Cooper who survives in popular memory is the author of those wholesome novels of sea and of forest which were the first American writings to win and to keep wide popularity. In touching on them we remarked the extraordinary truthfulness of their background; and this, probably, is the trait which gives them their highest positive value. It is hardly to so unusual a quality, however, that they have owed their popular vitality. Their plots, though conventional, are put together with considerable skill. In spite of prolixity one constantly feels curious to know what is coming next. In spite even of lifeless characters, this skilful handling of plot makes one again and again feel unexpected interest concerning what these personages are going to do or what is going to happen to them. As we have seen already, too, crucial episodes, such as the wreck of the "Ariel" in *The Pilot*, possess, in spite of careless phrasing, a vividness and a bravery sure to appeal to broad human temper. Cooper's commonplace plots, in short, are often interesting enough to atone for their prolixity; and whatever the conventionality of his characters, the spirit of his books is vigorously brave and manly.

Excellent as these traits are, however, they are not specifically American. Another trait of Cooper's work, less salient, but just as constant, may fairly be regarded as national. From beginning to end of his writings there is

hardly a passage which anybody would hesitate to put into the hands of a child; nor does this purity seem studied. The scenes of his novels are often laid in very rough places, and as a natural consequence many of his characters and incidents are of a rough, adventurous kind; but, with a delicacy as instinctive as his robustness, Cooper avoids those phases of rough human life which are essentially base. Cooper's Instinctive Purity.

Cooper lived until 1851, and Irving lived eight years longer. As both men wrote until they died, their work might evidently be held to extend to a later period than that in which we are considering them; for here we have treated them as almost contemporary with Brockden Brown, who died in 1810. In another aspect, however, they belong very early in the history of American letters. In 1798, we remember, the year when Wordsworth and Coleridge published the *Lyrical Ballads*, appeared also Brockden Brown's *Wieland*. In 1832 the death of Sir Walter Scott brought to an end that epoch of English letters which the *Lyrical Ballads* may be said to have opened. In that year Brown had long been dead; and both Irving and Cooper had still some years to write. The reputation of each, however, was virtually complete. Irving had already published his *Knickerbocker History*, his *Sketch Book*, his *Bracebridge Hall*, his *Tales of a Traveller*, his *Life of Columbus*, his *Fall of Granada*, and his *Alhambra;* nothing later materially increased his reputation. Cooper had published *The Spy*, *The Pioneers*, *The Pilot*, *Lionel Lincoln*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Prairie*, the *Red Rover*, the *Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*, *The Water Witch*, and the *Bravo*. When Scott died, it thus appears, Cooper too had produced enough to make his reputation permanent.

The three writers whom we have considered—Brockden Brown, Irving, and Cooper—were the only Americans who between 1798 and 1832 achieved lasting names in prose. Though they form no school, though they are very different from one another, two or three things may be said of them in common. They all developed in the Middle States; the names of all are associated with the chief city of that region, New York. The most significant work of all assumed a form which in the general history of literatures comes not early but late,—prose fiction. This form, meantime, happened to be on the whole that which was most popular in contemporary England.

Brown, Irving, and Cooper.

Again, in the previous literature of America, if literature it may be called, two serious motives were expressed. In the first place, particularly in New England, there was a considerable development of theologic thought. A little later, partly in New England, but more in Virginia and in New York, there was admirable political writing. These two motives—the one characteristic of the earliest type of native American, the second of that second type which politically expressed itself in the American Revolution—may be regarded as expressions in this country of the two ideals most deeply inherent in our native language,—those of the Bible and of the Common Law. Whatever the ultimate significance of American writing during the seventeenth or the eighteenth centuries, such of it as now remains worthy of attention is earnest in purpose, dealing either with the eternal destinies of mankind or with deep problems of political conduct.

Our first purely literary expression, on the other hand, shows a different temper. Neither Brown nor Irving nor Cooper has left us anything profoundly significant. All

three are properly remembered as writers of wholesome fiction; and the object of wholesome fiction is neither to lead men heavenward nor to teach them how to behave on earth; it is rather to please. There is a commonplace which divides great literature into the literature of knowledge, which enlarges the intellect, and that of power, which stimulates the emotions until they become living motives. Such work as Brockden Brown's or Irving's or Cooper's can hardly be put in either category. Theirs is rather a literature of wholesome pleasure.

This prose on which we have now touched was the most important literature produced in New York, or indeed in America, during the period which was marked in England by everything between the *Lyrical Ballads* and the death of Scott. Even in America, however, the time had its poetry. At this we must now glance.

IV

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

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In the early summer of 1878 there died at New York, from a sunstroke received just after delivering a speech at the unveiling of a monument in Central Park, William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), by far the most eminent man of letters in our chief city. The circumstances of his death show how thoroughly he retained his vitality

to the end; and his striking personal appearance combined with the extreme physical activity which kept him constantly in the streets to make him a familiar local figure. Yet his first published work—a very precocious one, to be sure,—had appeared before Brockden Brown died, in the same year with Scott's *Marmion;* and this remote 1808 had seen the *Quarterly Review* founded in England, and Andover Seminary in Massachusetts. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" had been printed in 1817, the year in which Byron wrote *Manfred*, in which Jane Austen died, in which Coleridge produced his *Biographia Literaria*, and Keats the first volume of his poems, and Mrs. Shelley her *Frankenstein*, and Moore his *Lalla Rookh*. A collected edition of Bryant's poems had appeared in 1821, the year when Keats died, when the first version of De Quincey's *Opium-Eater* came into existence, when Scott published *Kenilworth* and *The Pirate*, and Shelley *Adonais*. And incidentally Bryant was for a full half-century at the head of the *New York Evening Post*, which brought him the rare reward of a considerable personal fortune earned by a newspaper in which from beginning to end the editor could feel honest pride. As a journalist, indeed, Bryant belongs almost to our own time. As a poet, however,—and it is as a poet that we are considering him here,—he belongs to the earliest period of American letters.

Life. He was born, the son of a country doctor, at Cummington, a small town of Western Massachusetts, in 1794. At that time a country doctor, though generally poor, was, like the minister and the squire, an educated man, and a person of local eminence; and Dr. Bryant, who was occasionally a member of the General Court at Boston, came to have a considerable acquaintance among the better

sort of people in Massachusetts. The son was extremely precocious. When he was only thirteen years old, verses of his were printed in a country newspaper; and a year later, in 1808, his satire on President Jefferson, *The Embargo*, was brought to Boston by his admiring father and actually published. The only particular merit of this poem is accuracy of rhyme and metre, a trait which Bryant preserved until the end. For a year or so the boy went to Williams College, but as his father was too poor to keep him there, he soon entered a lawyer's office. Law, however, proved by no means congenial to him; he wanted to be a man of letters. In this aspiration his father sympathized; and when the son was twenty-three years of age, the father took to Boston a collection of his manuscripts, among which was "Thanatopsis," already six years old.

Precocity.

These manuscripts Dr. Bryant submitted to Mr. Willard Phillips, one of the three editors of the *North American Review*, then lately founded. Delighted with the verses, Phillips showed them to his colleagues, Mr. Richard Henry Dana and Professor Edward Tyrrell Channing. The story of the way in which these gentlemen received the poems throws light on the condition of American letters in 1817. According to Mr. Parke Godwin "they

listened attentively to his reading of them, when Dana, at the close, remarked with a quiet smile: 'Ah! Phillips, you have been imposed upon; no one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verses.'" Four years later, in 1821, Bryant delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College his longest poem, "The Ages"; during the same year he published in pamphlet form eight poems. There were only forty-four pages in all; but among the poems were both "The Waterfowl" and "Thanatopsis." The life of a country lawyer becoming more and more distasteful to him, he determined to move to town. He thought seriously of going to Boston,—a city with which at that time his affiliations were stronger than with any other; but instead he cast in his lot with New York, to which he finally went in 1825.

New York in 1825.

At that time Brockden Brown had been dead for fifteen years, and the reputations of Irving and of Cooper were established. At that time, too, there was in New York a considerable literary activity of which the results are now pretty generally forgotten.* Almost the only survival of New York poetry before Bryant came there, indeed, is Samuel Woodworth's accidentally popular "Old Oaken Bucket." The name of JAMES KIRKE PAULDING (1778–1860), to be sure, who was associated with Irving in *Salmagundi*, and who subsequently wrote a number of novels, and other prose, is still faintly remembered; and so are the names rather than the actual work of two poets, JOSEPH

* Whoever is curious to know something about it may well compare Rufus Wilmot Griswold's *Poets and Poetry of America* (1842), his *Prose Writers of America* (1847), his *Female Poets of America* (1849), and E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck's *Cyclopedia of American Literature* (1855), with Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature.*

RODMAN DRAKE (1795–1820) and FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790–1867).

Drake. Drake was a gentleman and a man of taste. He wrote several pretty things, among them a poem published after his death, entitled "The Culprit Fay" (1835). This conventional tale of some tiny fairies, supposed to haunt the Hudson River, is so much better than American poetry had previously been that one is at first disposed to speak of it enthusiastically. An obvious comparison puts it in true perspective. Drake's life happened nearly to coincide with that of Keats. The work of each was so early cut short by death, that it sometimes seems only an indication of what they might have done; and the contrast between these indications tells afresh the story of American letters. Keats, amid the full fervor of European experience, produced immortal verse; Drake, whose whole life was passed amid the national inexperience of New York, produced only pretty fancies.

Halleck. Fitz-Greene Halleck, five years older, survived Drake by forty-seven years. If we except his "Marco Bozzaris," however, which was published in 1825, his only surviving lines are comprised in the first stanza of his poem on the death of Drake, written in 1820:—

> "Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days!
> None knew thee but to love thee
> Nor named thee but to praise."

In 1811 Halleck and Drake contributed to the *New York Evening Post* a series of poetical satires entitled "The Croaker Papers;" and Halleck published a mildly satirical poem entitled *Fanny*. In 1827 he brought out *Alnwick Castle, and Other Poems*. In 1832 his

poetic career was virtually closed by his acceptance of a clerical position in the employ of Mr. John Jacob Astor. The general insignificance of New York letters at the time when Bryant first came to the town is in no way better typified than by the fact that literary work so inconsiderable as Halleck's has been deemed worthy of a bronze statue, still sitting cross-legged in the Mall of Central Park.

Evenness of Bryant's Work.

Compared with such work as this, there is no wonder that poems like "Thanatopsis" and "The Waterfowl" seemed to the early editors of the *North American Review* too good to be native; and, as we have seen, Bryant's life and activity were so prolonged that it is hard to remember how nearly his poetical work was accomplished at the beginning of his career. It was not all produced at once, of course; but, as is often the case with precocious excellence,—with men, for example, like his contemporaries, Landor and Whittier,—even though he rarely fell below his own first level, he hardly ever surpassed it. This is clearly seen if we compare the familiar concluding lines of "Thanatopsis," published before he was twenty-seven, with a passage of about equal length from "Among the Trees," published after he was seventy. The former lines run thus:—

> "So live, that when thy summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan, which moves
> To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,
> Thou go not, like a quarry-slave at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

The latter lines are these:—

> "Ye have no history. I ask in vain
> Who planted on the slope this lofty group
> Of ancient pear-trees that with spring-time burst
> Into such a breadth of bloom. One bears a scar
> Where the quick lightning scorched its trunk, yet still
> It feels the breath of Spring, and every May
> Is white with blossoms. Who it was that laid
> Their infant roots in earth, and tenderly
> Cherished the delicate sprays, I ask in vain,
> Yet bless the unknown hand to which I owe
> The annual festival of bees, these songs
> Of birds within their leafy screen, these shouts
> Of joy from children gathering up the fruit
> Shaken in August from the willing boughs."

The former of these passages is the work of an inexperienced country boy; the latter, by the same hand, is the work of an old man who had made a fortune as the most successful journalist in New York; but, so far as internal evidence goes, the latter might almost have been written first. Beyond doubt, as an American poet Bryant really belongs to the generation contemporary with Sir Walter Scott.

Bryant's Poetry Contemporary with Scott's.

In the year of Scott's death, indeed,—that same 1832 which saw in England the passage of the Reform Bill and in America the Nullification Act of South Carolina and President Jackson's Bank Veto,—Bryant had already been for four years at the head of the *Evening Post*, and the first considerable edition of his poems appeared both in England and in America. Nothing which he wrote later, except perhaps his translations,—some admirable versions of Spanish lyrics, which are said to have attracted many young eyes to fascinating romantic vistas, and far later

his well-known rendering of Homer—will much alter the impression produced by his early volume. The life-long evenness of his work seems to justify reference at this point to what he wrote about poetry many years later. In 1871, as editor of a *Library of Poetry and Song*, he stated at considerable length what he conceived to be the most important qualities of lasting poetry. "The best poetry," he says,—"that which takes the strongest hold on the general mind, not in one age only but in all ages,—is that which is always simple and always luminous." His Theory of Poetry.

Simple and luminous Bryant was from beginning to end. For this simple luminosity he paid the price of that deliberate coolness which Lowell thus satirized in the *Fable for Critics*, of 1848:— His Simplicity.

"There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is ignified,
Save when by reflection 't is kindled o' nights
With a semblance of flame by the chill Northern Lights.
He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation
(There's no doubt that he stands in supreme ice-olation),
Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on,
But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on,—
He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on:
Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you choose, he has 'em,
But he lacks the one merit of kindling enthusiasm;
If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,
Like being stirred up with the very North Pole."

If Bryant's careful attention to luminosity, however, prevented him from ever being passionate, and gave his work the character so often mistaken for commonplace, it never deprived him of tender delicacy. Take, for example, "The Death of the Flowers," of which the opening line—

"The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year"—

is among his most familiar. The last two stanzas run as follows:—

"And now, when comes the calm mild day, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their winter home;
When the sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the trees are still,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The south wind searches for the flowers whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

"And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side.
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers."

To a generation familiar with all the extravagances of nineteenth-century romanticism, a feeling so deliberately restrained, so close to sentimentality, may well seem unimpassioned. But one cannot dwell on these lines without feeling genuine sweetness of temper, or without finally discerning, in what at first seems chilly deliberation of phrase, what is rather a loving care for every syllable.

His Melancholy.

The allusion in the last stanza is to the early death from consumption of Bryant's sister. Only a few years before his father had died of the same disease. So he had personal reason for melancholy. As one looks through his work, however, one is apt to wonder whether, even if his life had been free from personal bereavement, his verse might not still have hovered sentimentally about the dead. His most successful poem, "Thanatopsis," was apparently written before death had often come near him; and it is

hardly excessive to say that if a single name were sought for his collected works, from beginning to end, a version of that barbarous Greek title might be found suitable, and the whole volume fairly entitled "Glimpses of the Grave." Of course he touched on other things; but he touched on mortality so constantly as to make one feel regretfully sure that whenever he felt stirred to poetry his fancy started for the Valley of the Shadow of Death. In this, of course, he was not peculiar. The subject had such fascination for eighteenth-century versifiers that Blair and Young made it the chief motive for a considerable body of verse, and in 1751 Gray's *Elegy* crowned this school of poetry with an undying masterpiece. This underlying impulse of Bryant's poetry, we thus perceive, was general in the middle of the eighteenth century; yet Bryant's style, distinctly affected by that of Cowper, and still more by that of Wordsworth, clearly belongs to the nineteenth. Bryant thus reverses the relation of substance to style which we remarked in the prose of his contemporary, Irving. Imbued with nineteenth-century romantic temper, Irving wrote in the classical style of the century before; Bryant, writing in the simple, luminous style of his own century, expressed a somewhat formal sentimentality which had hardly characterized vital work in England for fifty years.

Summary

Such was the eldest of our nineteenth-century poets, the first whose work was recognized abroad. He has never been widely popular; and in the course of a century whose poetry has been chiefly marked by romantic passion, he has tended to seem more and more commonplace. But those who think him commonplace forget his historical significance. His work was really the first which proved

to England what native American poetry might be. The Old World was looking for some wild manifestation of this new, hardly apprehended, western democracy. Instead, what it found in Bryant, the one poetic contemporary of Irving and Cooper whose writings have lasted, was fastidious over-refinement, tender sentimentality, and pervasive luminosity. Refinement, in short, and conscious refinement, groups Bryant with Irving, with Cooper, and with Brockden Brown. In its beginning the American literature of the nineteenth century was marked rather by delicacy than by strength, or by any such outburst of previously unphrased emotion as on general principles democracy might have been expected to excite.

V

EDGAR ALLAN POE

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In April, 1846, Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) published in *Godey's Lady's Book* an elaborate article on William Cullen Bryant. In the six following numbers of the same periodical, appeared that series of comments on the literary personages of the day which were collected under the name of the *Literati* (1850). The personal career of Poe was so erratic that one can hardly group him with any definite literary school. It seems, however, more than accidental that his principal critical work concerned the contemporary literature of New York; and though he was born in Boston and passed a good deal of his life in Virginia, he spent his literary years rather more in New York than anywhere else. Accordingly this seems the most fitting place to consider him.

From the beginning his career was erratic. His father, the son of a Revolutionary soldier, had gone wrong and brought up on the stage; his mother was an English actress of whom little is known. The pair, who chanced to be in Boston when their son was born, died when he was still a little child. At the age of two, he was adopted by a gentleman of Richmond, Virginia, named Allan, who soon took him to Europe, where he remained from 1815 to 1820. In 1826 he was for a year at the University of Virginia, where his career was brought to an end by a gambling scrape, which in turn brought almost to an end his relations with his adopted father. In 1827 his first verses were published, a little volume entitled *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. Then he drifted into the army, and a temporary reconciliation with Mr. Allan got him into the Military Academy at West Point, from which in 1831 he was dismissed. After that he always lived from hand to mouth, supporting himself as a journalist and as a contributor to numberless periodicals which have long since disappeared. His *Manuscript Found in a Bottle* (1833), procured him for a while the editorship of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, published at Richmond and for many years the most successful literary periodical of the South. In 1835 he married a charming but penniless girl, a relative of his own. In 1839 and 1840 he edited the *Gentleman's Magazine* in Philadelphia; from 1840 to 1842 he

Life.

Edgar A. Poe.

edited *Graham's Magazine* in New York; his general career was that of a literary hack. In 1847, after a life of distressing poverty, his wife died; two years later Poe himself died miserably.

Born fifteen years later than Bryant and dead twenty-nine years earlier, Poe, now more than fifty years in his grave, seems to belong to an earlier period of our letters; but really, as we have seen, Bryant's principal work was done before 1832. At that time Poe had published only three volumes of verse; his lasting prose came somewhat later; in fact, the permanent work of Poe may be said to coincide with the first twelve years of the Victorian epoch. In 1838, the year of *Arthur Gordon Pym*, Dickens was at work on *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*; and Carlyle's *French Revolution* was a new book. In 1849, when Poe died, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and the first two volumes of Macaulay's *History* had lately appeared; Dickens was publishing *David Copperfield*, and Thackeray *Pendennis;* and Ruskin brought out his *Seven Lamps of Architecture.* Had Poe survived to Bryant's years, he would have outlived not only Bryant himself but Emerson and Hawthorne and Longfellow and Lowell, and indeed almost every literary contemporary except Holmes.

Poe's English Contemporaries.

The very mention of these names is enough to call to mind a distinction between the career of Poe and that of almost every other American whose literary reputation has survived from the days when he was writing. The men on whom we have already touched were personally of the better sort, either by birth or by achieved position. So in general were the chief men of letters who made the Renaissance of New England the most important fact in American literary history. Poe, on the other hand, was

always a waif and a stray, essentially a Bohemian. There was in his nature something which made futile the effort of that benevolent Virginian gentleman to adopt him into the gentler classes of America. In his lifetime, there can be little doubt, Poe must consequently have seemed personally inferior to most of his eminent contemporaries in American letters. Yet now that all are dead, he begins to seem quite as important as any.

The historical position of Poe in American letters can be seen by glancing at his already mentioned papers, the *Literati*. It is worth while to name the thirty-eight persons, then mostly living in New York and certainly contributing to the New York periodicals of the moment, whom Poe thought considerable and interesting enough for notice. Here is the list: George Bush, George H. Colton, N. P. Willis, William M. Gillespie, Charles F. Briggs, William Kirkland, John W. Francis, Anna Cora Mowatt, George B. Cheever, Charles Anthon, Ralph Hoyt, Gulian C. Verplanck, Freeman Hunt, Piero Maroncelli, Laughton Osborn, Fitz-Greene Halleck, Ann S. Stephens, Evert A. Duyckinck, Mary Gove, James Aldrich, Thomas Dunn Brown, Henry Cary, Christopher Pearse Cranch, Sarah Margaret Fuller, James Lawson, Caroline M. Kirkland, Prosper M. Wetmore, Emma C. Embury, Epes Sargent, Frances Sargent Osgood, Lydia M. Child, Elizabeth Bogart, Catherine M. Sedgwick, Lewis Gaylord Clark, Anne C. Lynch, Charles Fenno Hoffman, Mary E. Hewitt, and Richard Adams Locke. In this list there is one name which we have already found worthy of a glance, —that of Fitz-Greene Halleck. There is another which we have mentioned in notes,—that of Evert A. Duyckinck. There are two at which we shall certainly glance later,—

The Literati.

those of N. P. Willis and Sarah Margaret Fuller. And there are two or three which we may mention,—those of Mrs. Child, of Lewis Gaylord Clark, and of Charles Fenno Hoffman. The very names of the other "Literati" are generally forgotten.

Our chief reason for recalling them is not to remind ourselves of what they happened to be publishing when Poe's best work was done; it is rather to point out why a considerable part of Poe's best work has itself been forgotten. His critical writings * are the only ones in which he shows how he could deal with actual fact; and in dealing with actual fact he proved himself able. Though some of the facts he dealt with, however, were worthy of his pen,—he was among the first, for example, to recognize the merit of Tennyson and of Mrs. Browning,—most of them in the course of fifty years have proved insignificant. For all this, they existed at the moment. Poe was a journalist, who had to write about what was in the air; and he wrote about it so well that in certain aspects this critical work seems his best. He dabbled a little in philosophy, of course, particularly on the æsthetic side; but he had neither the spiritual insight which must underlie serious philosophizing, nor the scholarly training which must precede lasting, solid thought. What he did possess to a rare degree was the temper of an enthusiastic artist, who genuinely enjoyed and welcomed whatever in his own art, poetry, he found meritorious. He dealt with questions of fine art in a spirit which if sometimes narrow, often dogmatic, and never scholarly, is sincere, fearless, and generally eager in its impulsive recognition of merit.

Other Critical Work.

Take, for example, a stray passage from the *Literati*,—

* Collected in Vols. VI–VIII of Stedman and Woodberry's edition.

Mrs. Osgood.

his enthusiastic criticism of Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, a lady whose work never fulfilled the promise which Poe discerned in it:—

"Whatever be her theme, she at once extorts from it its whole essentiality of grace. Fanny Ellsler has been often lauded; true poets have sung her praises; but we look in vain for anything written about her, which so distinctly and vividly paints her to the eye as the . . . quatrains which follow:—

"'She comes—the spirit of the dance!
And but for those large eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She'd seem a wanderer from the skies.

"'So light that, *gazing breathless there,*
Lest the celestial dream should go,
You'd think the music in the air
Waved the fair vision to and fro;

"'*Or that the melody's sweet flow*
Within the radiant creature played,
And those soft wreathing arms of snow
And white sylph feet the music made.'

. . . . . .

"This is, indeed, poetry—and of the most unquestionable kind—poetry truthful in the proper sense—that is to say, breathing of Nature. There is here nothing forced or artificial—no hardly sustained enthusiasm. The poetess speaks because she feels, and what she feels; but then what she feels is felt only by the truly poetical."*

This passage deserves our attention both as containing an unusually good fragment of the long-forgotten poetry produced in Poe's New York, and as indicating the temper in which Poe approached contemporary literature. To his mind the only business of a poet was to make

* Stedman and Woodberry's edition, VIII, 104–106. The italics are Poe's.

things of beauty. If in what professed to be poetry he found ugly things, he unhesitatingly condemned them; if he found anything which seemed beautiful, nobody could welcome it more eagerly. Poe really loved his art; and whatever his lack of training, he had a natural, instinctive, eager perception of beauty. This, too, he set forth in a style always simple and clear, always free from affectation or mannerism, and always marked by a fine sense of rhythm. All these merits appear saliently in those portions of his work which deal with actual fact.

His philosophical writings seem more suspicious. As a journalist Poe sometimes deliberately hoaxed the public; and when you read such papers as his "Poetic Principle," his "Rationale of Verse," or his "Philosophy of Composition," it is hard to feel sure that he is not gravely hoaxing you. On the whole, he probably was not. In his work of this kind one feels intense ingenuity, total lack of scholarship, and a temper far from judicial. The traits which make Poe's occasional criticisms excellent—swiftness of perception and fineness of taste—are matters not of training but of temperament.

Tales and Poems.

Temperament, indeed, of a markedly individual kind is what gives lasting character and vitality to the tales and the poems by which he has become permanently known. Both alike are instantly to be distinguished from the critical work at which we have glanced by the fact that they never deal with things which he believed actually to exist, whether in this world or in the next. Poe's individual and powerful style, to be sure, full of what seems like vividness, constantly produces "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith;" but the futile attempts to illustrate his work prove that fictions

even so vivid as Usher and the Lady Madeline and the unearthly house of their doom are things which no one can translate into visual terms without demonstrating their unreality. Yet, for all this unreality, there hovers around them a mood, a temper, an impalpable but unmistakable quality, which could hardly have emanated from any other human being than Edgar Allan Poe.

Individuality.

This individuality is hard to define. One or two things about it, however, seem clear. In tales and poems alike he is most characteristic when dealing with mysteries; and though to a certain point these mysteries, often horrible, are genuinely mysterious, they reveal no trace of spiritual insight, no sense of the eternities which lie beyond human perception. Excellent in their way, one cannot but feel them to be melodramatic. From beginning to end Poe had that inextricable combination of meretriciousness and sincerity which marks the temperament of actors in general.

Yet genius he certainly had, and to no small degree in that excellent form which has been described as "an infinite capacity for taking pains." In his tales, now of melodramatic mystery, again of elaborate ingenuity, one feels not only his constant power of imagination, one feels also masterly precision of touch. As you read over and over again both Poe's verse and his prose, particularly if you read aloud, you will feel more and more that almost every vowel, every consonant, and more surely still every turn of the rhythm which places the accent so definitely where the writer means it to fall, indicates not only a rare sense of form, but a still more rare power of expression.

They indicate more than this, too. Whether the things

which Poe wished to express were worth his pains is not the question. He knew what they were, and he unfeignedly wished to express them. He had almost in perfection a power more frequently shown by skilful melodramatic actors than by men of letters,—the power of assuming an intensely unreal mood and of so setting it forth as to make us for the moment share it unresistingly. This power one feels perhaps most palpably in the peculiar melody of his verse. The "Haunted Palace" may be stagey, but there is something in its lyric quality—that quality whereby poetry impalpably but unmistakably performs the office best performed by pure music—which throws a reader into a mood almost too subtle for words.

In the strenuousness of Poe's artistic conscience we found a trait more characteristic of America than of England,—a trait which is perhaps involved in the national self-consciousness of our country. His general purity of feeling, which might hardly have been expected from the circumstances of his personal career, is equally characteristic of his America. It is allied, perhaps, with that freedom from actuality which we have seen to characterize his most apparently vivid work. The world which bred Poe was a world whose national life was still inexperienced.

Summary.

Intensely individual, and paradoxically sincere, Poe set forth a peculiar range of mysterious though not significant emotion. In the fact that this emotion, even though insignificant, was mysterious, is a trait which we begin to recognize as characteristically American, at least at that moment when American life meant something else than wide human experience. There is something characteristically American, too, in the fact that Poe's work gains its effect from artistic conscience, an ever present

sense of form. Finally, there is something characteristically American in Poe's instinctive delicacy. Poe's chief merits, in brief, prove merits of refinement. Even through a time so recent as his, refinement of temper, conscientious sense of form, and instinctive neglect of actual fact remained the most characteristic traits, if not of American life, at least of American letters.

VI

THE KNICKERBOCKER SCHOOL

References

THE KNICKERBOCKER SCHOOL

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IN the course of our glances at Poe we had occasion to recognize the existence of an extensive, though now forgotten, periodical literature,—*Godey's Lady's Book*, *The*

Southern Literary Messenger, *Graham's Magazine*, and the like,—which carried on the impulse toward periodical publication already evident in the time of Brockden Brown. Throughout the older regions of America such things sprang up, flourished for a little while, and withered, in weed-like profusion. So far as these periodicals were literary, they were intensely conventional and sentimental. In brief, they are another proof of what inevitable waste must accompany any period of artistic achievement.

The Knickerbocker.

In 1833 there was founded in New York the magazine in which this phase of literary activity may be said to have culminated. The *Knickerbocker* thus deserves more attention than its positive merit would warrant. It was founded the year after Bryant brought out the first considerable collection of his poems,—that 1832 which was marked in English history by the Reform Bill and in English literature by the death of Scott. The chief founder of the *Knickerbocker* was CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN (1806–1884), a gentleman of New York whom Poe recorded among the Literati of 1846, who published a number of novels and poems, and whose career sadly closed with an insanity which, beginning in 1849, kept him for a full thirty-five years in the seclusion where he died. During its thirty years or so of existence the *Knickerbocker* became not only the most conspicuous, but also the oldest periodical of its class in the United States. Though Poe's Literati were not all contributors to it, their names fairly typify the general character of its staff, toward the end of the '40s.

In 1854 its editor was Lewis Gaylord Clark. As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the magazine was approaching, it was proposed that "the surviving

writers for the *Knickerbocker* should each furnish, gratuitously, an article, and that the collection should be published in a volume of tasteful elegance, of which the entire proceeds should be devoted to the building, on the margin of the Hudson, of a cottage, suitable for the home of a man of letters, who, like Mr. Clark, is also a lover of rural life." The book, which is entitled the *Knickerbocker Gallery*, was published early in 1855.

The Knickerbocker Gallery.

To it Irving contributed some notes from a commonplace book of the year 1821. Bryant sent some verses on "A Snow Shower"; and Halleck a poetical "Epistle to Clark." There are also contributions from New England: Holmes sent a four-page poem entitled "A Vision of the Housatonic"; Fields sent an "Invitation to our Cottage Home," in sixteen lines of innocent blank verse; Longfellow contributed a poem, "The Emperor's Bird's-Nest"; and Lowell sent his verse on "Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel" at Florence. The other contributors, mostly either resident in New York or closely associated with that city, may be taken as fairly typical of that phase in the letters of New York which has sometimes been called the Knickerbocker School. Some of their names have survived; those, for example, of George Henry Boker, of Bayard Taylor, of John G. Saxe, of Henry Theodore Tuckerman, of George William Curtis, and—an unexpected person to find in such company—of William H. Seward. But of all the names in the book, the most characteristic of the period is NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806–1867).

Willis.

Willis was born at Portland, Maine, where his father, a professional journalist, was an ardent member of the old Congregational communion to which the dialect of New

England long gave the name of "orthodox." When the son was a mere boy, the father removed to Boston, and then became a deacon in the Park Street Church, perhaps the most rigidly orthodox of all the Boston churches. Life as the son of a Calvinistic deacon in the Unitarian city was so little to young Willis's taste that, after he had graduated from Andover and Yale and had tried magazine work in Boston with small success, he was glad to go to New York in the summer of 1831.

N. P. Willis

In the autumn of 1831 he became associated with GEORGE P. MORRIS (1802–1864),—now remembered only as the author of a once popular sentimental poem beginning "Woodman, spare that tree,"—in the conduct of a periodical called the *New York Mirror*. Between them they hit upon a plan of sending Willis abroad, from whence he should write regular European letters; so to Europe he went at the age of twenty-five. There he was made much of by important people, and his letters to the *New York Mirror* related his social experiences with what was sometimes held undue detail. In 1846, having returned to America, Willis started the *Home Journal* and, like Irving, retired to a country-place on the banks of the Hudson River.

Letters from Abroad.

In Willis's palmy days, he was the most popular American writer out of New England. He dashed off all sorts

of things with great ease,—not only such descriptions of life and people as formed the staple of his contributions to the *Mirror*, but poems and stories, and whatever else belongs to occasional periodical writing. Throughout, his prose style had a rather provoking kind of jaunty triviality.

Work so slight may seem hardly worth emphasis. As time passes, however, Willis appears more and more the most characteristic New York man of letters between 1832 and the Civil War,—the most typical of the school which flourished throughout the career of the *Knickerbocker* magazine. The earlier writers whom we have considered were all imitative, or at least their work seems reminiscent. Brockden Brown is reminiscent of Godwin, Irving of Goldsmith, Cooper of Scott, Bryant of Cowper and Wordsworth, and so on. In a similar way Willis may be said to remind one of Leigh Hunt, and perhaps here and there of Benjamin Disraeli, and Bulwer. The contrast of these last names with those of the earlier models tells the story. As men of letters, Godwin and Goldsmith and Scott and Cowper and Wordsworth are distinctly more serious than Bulwer and Disraeli and Leigh Hunt. The merits of the former group are solid; those of the latter are too slight to bear dilution. As a descriptive journalist, Willis is still worth reading. His letters from abroad give pleasant and vivid pictures of European life in the '30s; his *Letters from Under a Bridge* give pleasant pictures of country life in our Middle States a little later; but when it comes to anything like literature, one can hardly avoid the conviction that he had little to say.

Insignificance of Willis's Work.

In the work of the earlier New York school, and even in the work of Poe, we have already remarked, nothing was

Summary.

produced which profoundly concerned either the eternities or the practical conduct of life. The literature of Brockden Brown, of Irving, of Cooper, and of Poe is only a literature of pleasure, possessing, so far as it has excellence at all, only the excellence of conscientious refinement. Willis, too, so far as his work may be called literature, made nothing higher than literature of pleasure; and for all the bravery with which he worked throughout his later life, one cannot help feeling in his writings, as well as in some of the social records of his earlier years, a palpable falsity of taste. He was a man of far wider social experience than Bryant or Cooper, probably indeed than Irving himself. Yet, after all, one feels in him rather the quality of a dashing adventurer, of an amiable, honorable Bohemian, than such secure sense of personal dignity as marked Bryant and Irving and their contemporaries in New England. A school of letters in which a man of Willis's quality could attain the eminence which for years made him conspicuous was certainly declining.

In brief, this school, which began in 1798 with the work of Brockden Brown and persisted throughout the lifetime of Sir Walter Scott in the writings of Irving, of Cooper, and of Bryant, never dealt with deeply significant matters. Almost from the time when Bryant first collected his poems, the literature made in New York and under its influence became less and less important. New York newspapers, to be sure, of which the best examples are the *Evening Post* and the *Tribune*, were steadily gaining in merit and influence; but literature pure and simple was not. If we may hold Poe to have belonged to the general phase of American literary activity which we have been considering,—the only phase which during the first half of the nine-

teenth century developed itself outside of New England,—we may say that this literary activity reached its acme in the work of Poe, itself for all its merit not deeply significant. And even in Poe's time, and still more surely a little later, the literature of which he proves the most important master declined into such good-humored trivialities as one finds in the *Knickerbocker Gallery* and in the life and work of Willis. By the middle of the nineteenth century the literary impulse of the Middle States had proved abortive. For the serious literature of America we must turn to New England.

BOOK V

THE RENAISSANCE OF NEW ENGLAND

BOOK V

THE RENAISSANCE OF NEW ENGLAND

I

SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW ENGLAND

References

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From the time, shortly after 1720, when Franklin left Boston, where Increase and Cotton Mather were still preaching, we have paid little attention to that part of the country. For during the seventy-two years which intervened between Cotton Mather's death and the nineteenth century, Boston was of less literary importance than it

was before or than it has been since. To understand its revival, we must call to mind a little more particularly some general characteristics of New England.

Isolation of New England.

Boston, whose geographical position has made it the principal city of that region, may be distinguished from most American cities by the fact that, comparatively speaking, it is not on the way anywhere. The main lines of travel from abroad to-day come to the port of New York. People bound thence for Washington proceed through Philadelphia and Baltimore; people bound westward are pretty sure to trend toward Chicago; people going southwest pass through St. Louis or New Orleans; people going around the world generally sail from San Francisco; but the only people who are apt to make the excursion from New York to Boston are those who do so for that purpose. Of course, the ease of intercommunication nowadays combines with several other causes to disguise this isolation of the capital city of New England. All the same, isolation really characterizes not only the city, but the whole region of which it is the natural centre.

This physical isolation was somewhat less pronounced when the English-speaking settlements in America were confined to the fringe of colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. Even then, however, a man proceeding by land from Boston to Philadelphia had to pass through New York; and so one proceeding from New York to Virginia or the Carolinas had to pass through Philadelphia; but the only people who needed to visit Boston were people bound thither. It had happened, meanwhile, that the regions of Eastern Massachusetts, although not literally the first American colonies to be settled, were probably the first to be politically and socially developed. Sewall's

diary, for example, an artless record of busy life in and about Boston from 1674 to 1729, has few more remarkable traits than the fact that the surroundings and in many respects the society which it represents are hardly yet unfamiliar to people born and bred in Eastern New England.

Homogeneity.

In the first place, the whole country from the Piscataqua to Cape Cod, and westward to the Connecticut River, was almost as settled as it is to-day. Many towns of Sewall's time, to be sure, have been divided into smaller ones; but the name and the local organization of almost every town of his time still persist; in two hundred years the municipal outlines of Massachusetts have undergone hardly more change than any equal space of England or of France. In Sewall's time, again, the population of this region, though somewhat different from that which at present exists, was much like that which was lately familiar to anybody who can remember the New England country in 1860. It was homogeneous, and so generally native that any inhabitants but born Yankees attracted attention; and the separate towns were so distinct that any one who knew much of the country could probably infer from a man's name just where he came from. So isolated a region, with so indigenous a population, naturally developed a pretty rigid social system.

Tradition has long supposed this system to have been extremely democratic, as in some superficial aspect it was. The popular forms of local government which were early established, the general maintenance of schools in every town at public expense, and the fact that almost any respectable trade was held a proper occupation for anybody, have gone far to disguise the truth that from the very set-

Rigid Social Structure.

tlement of New England certain people there have enjoyed an often recognized position of social superiority. This Yankee aristocracy, to be sure, has never been strictly hereditary; with almost every generation old names have socially vanished and new ones appeared. Until well into the nineteenth century, however, two facts about New England society can hardly be questioned: at any given time there was a tacitly recognized upper class, sometimes described by the word "quality"; and although in the course of time most families had their ups and downs, such changes were never so swift or so radical as materially to alter the general social structure.

In the beginning, as Cotton Mather's old word, "theocracy," asserted, the socially and politically dominant class was the clergy. Until 1885, indeed, a relic of this fact survived in the Quinquennial Catalogues of Harvard College, where the names of all graduates who became ministers were still distinguished by italics. In the same catalogues the names of graduates who became governors or judges, or in certain other offices attained public distinction, were printed in capital letters. These now trivial details indicate how the old social hierarchy of New England was based on education, public service, and the generally acknowledged importance of the ministry. When the mercantile class of the eighteenth century grew rich, it enjoyed in Boston a similar distinction, maintained by pretty careful observance of the social traditions which by that time had become immemorial. And as the growing complexity of society in country towns developed the learned professions of law and medicine, the squire and the doctor were almost everywhere recognized as persons of consideration. From the beginning, meanwhile, there

had been in New England two other kinds of people, tacitly felt to be of lower rank: those plain folks such as were originally known by the epithet "goodman," who, maintaining personal respectability, never rose to intellectual or political eminence, and never made more than enough money to keep decently out of debt, and those descendants of immigrant servants and the like, whose general character resembled that of the poor whites of the South. Just as the local aristocracy of fifty years ago provided almost every Yankee village with its principal people, so this lowest class contributed to almost every village a recognized group of village drunkards.

Social Stability.

The political forms which governed this isolated population were outwardly democratic; the most characteristic were the town-meetings of which so much has been written. The population itself, too, was nowhere so large as to allow any resident of a given town to be a complete stranger to any other; but as the generations passed, the force of local tradition slowly, insensibly increased until, long before 1800, the structure of New England society had become extremely rigid. Sewall, as we have seen, preserves an unconscious picture of this society in the closing years of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. In more deliberate literature there are various more conscious pictures of it later. To mention only a few, Mrs. Stowe's *Oldtown Folks* gives an admirably vivid account of the Norfolk country about 1800; Whittier's *Snow-Bound* preserves in "Flemish Pictures" the Essex County farmers of a few years later; and Lowell's papers on "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago" and on "A Great Public Character"—Josiah Quincy—give more stately pictures of Middlesex County at about the same time. The inci-

dental glimpses of life in Jacob Abbott's "Rollo Books" are artlessly true of Yankee life in the '40s; Miss Lucy Larcom's *New England Girlhood* and Dr. Edward Everett Hale's more cursory *New England Boyhood* carry the story from a little earlier to a little later. Miss Alcott's *Little Women* does for the '60s what "Rollo" does for the '40s. And the admirable tales of Miss Mary Wilkins and of Miss Sarah Orne Jewett portray the later New England country in its decline. In all these works, and in the many others of which we may take them as typical, you will find people of quality familiarly mingling with others, but tacitly recognized as socially superior, almost like an hereditary aristocracy.

Dominance of the Clergy.

Such fixity of social structure, developed during two centuries of geographical and social isolation, could not help resulting in characteristic ways of thinking and feeling. There can be little doubt that the deepest traits of Yankee character had their origin in the intense religious convictions of the immigrants. The dominant class of pristine New England were the clergy, whose temper so permeated our seventeenth-century literature. Their creed was sternly Calvinistic; and Calvinism imposes upon whoever accepts it the duty of constant, terribly serious self-searching. The question before every individual who holds this faith is whether he can discern within himself the signs which shall prove him probably among the elect of God. The one certain sign of his regeneration may be found in spontaneous consciousness of ability to use his will in accordance with that of God; in other words, the elect, and no one else, can be admitted by unmerited divine grace into something like spiritual communion with God himself. God himself embodies absolute right

and absolute truth. What the strenuously self-searching inner life of serious Yankees aimed to attain, accordingly, was immutable conviction of absolute truth.

This it sought under the guidance of a tyrannically dominant priestly class. Till well after 1800, the orthodox clergy of New England maintained their formal eminence almost unbroken. In every village the settled minister, who usually held his office for life, was a man apart; but he was in constant correspondence with his fellows elsewhere. If by any chance a New England parson happened to go away from home, he naturally put up at the minister's in every town where he passed a night. As Dr. Holmes once put the case, the Yankee clergy formed something like a Brahmin caste, poor in the goods of this world, but autocratic in power.

Power of New England Congregations.

A fact about them which is often forgotten, however, profoundly influenced New England life. Once in office, they exercised tyrannical authority; but to exercise this, they had to get into office and to stay there. This they could do only after being "called," as the phrase still goes, by a majority of the church members. Thus the elect of God, as somebody has phrased it, became the electors of God's chosen. From this state of things resulted a palpable check on the power of the old Yankee ministers. In one aspect they were autocratic tyrants; in another they were subject to the tyrannical power of an irresponsible majority vote. The kind of thing which sometimes resulted has always been familiar in America. The first President of Harvard College was compelled to resign his office because he believed in baptism by immersion; and Jonathan Edwards, after twenty years of service, was deposed from the pulpit of Northampton at the instance of

a disaffected congregation. If the old New England clergy, in fact, felt bound to watch and guard their congregations, whose errors they denounced with all the solemnity of divine authority, the congregations from the beginning returned the compliment. They watched, they criticized, they denounced errors of the clergy almost as sharply as the clergy watched and criticized and denounced theirs.

One can see why this state of things was unavoidable. Sincere Calvinists believed that divine grace vouchsafed only to the elect the power of perceiving absolute truth. The elect, chosen at God's arbitrary pleasure, might quite as probably be found among the laity as the unregenerate might be found among the clergy. And any mistake anywhere in the system was no trivial matter; it literally meant eternal doom. So the deepest fact in the personal life of oldest New England, on the part of clergy and laity alike, was this intensely earnest, reciprocally tyrannical, lifelong search for absolute truth.

Rise of the Mercantile Class.

Toward the period of the American Revolution the mercantile prosperity of Boston had tended to develop in the capital city of New England the kind of people familiar to us in the portraits of John Singleton Copley (1737–1815); and their manners were becoming superficially like those of their contemporary England. The Boston gentry of the third quarter of the eighteenth century were a wealthier class, and in closer contact with the Old World than any had been before their time. In various aspects, the society which Copley painted was probably beginning to lose some characteristic native traits. If these were momentarily disappearing from the surface of fashionable New England life, however, they remained a little beneath

it in all their pristine force. The literary history of the Revolution shows that the arguments of the Tories may be distinguished from those of the Revolutionists by a pretty sharp line. The temper of the conservative party which the Revolution overthrew was marked by strong attachment to established forms of law. The temper of that revolutionary party which ultimately triumphed was marked, despite respectful recognition of legal precedent, by a more instinctive liking for absolute right. In this revolutionary attachment to absolute right, there is something more analogous to the unquestioning faith in absolute truth which marked the ancestral Calvinists than we can discern in that respect for law and order which had become the dominant sentiment of the Tories. However debatable the suggestion may be, the work of the Revolution in New England sometimes looks like the reassertion of the old native type in a society which for a little while had seemed to be yielding precedence to persons of somewhat more cosmopolitan sympathy.

Characteristics of this New Generation.

This new generation of dominant New Englanders, however, many of whom were born in the country and came to Boston in search of fortune, was in many ways sounder and more characteristically native than the generation which it supplanted. To speak of it as if it were a commonplace lower class which had emerged from a great political convulsion, would be totally to misunderstand the situation. In the first place, the men of whom it was composed would have been recognized anywhere as remarkably able; in the second place, if generally descended from families for the moment less conspicuous than those whom Copley had painted a generation earlier, they were usually people who had inherited the sturdiest

traditions of New England manhood. Many of them could trace descent from the "quality" of a century or so before; and at least until after the Revolution, even the lower classes of native New England had never so far departed from the general native type as to resemble a European populace or mob. So the New England gentlemen who came to their best when Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828) was painting were mostly people who retained, in rather more purity than the provincial aristocracy which for a while had been more fortunate, the vigorous traits of the original native character. Coming to prominence and fortune, too, with the growth of our new national life, they combined with the vigor of their untired blood a fine flush of independence.

Economic Development.

Materially this new generation declared itself in several obvious ways. The first was a development of foreign commerce, particularly with the East Indies. This brought our native sailors and merchants into personal contact with every part of the world where they could make trade pay. The consequent enlargement of the mental horizon of New England was almost incalculable. Incidentally this foreign trade helped develop that race of seamen which so asserted the naval power of the United States in the War of 1812. The embargo which preceded that War diverted the more energetic spirit of New England from foreign commerce. Before long there ensued that development of manufactures, particularly on the Merrimac River, which remains so conspicuous a source of New England wealth. And at just about the time when these manufactures were finally established, railways at last brought Boston into constant and swift communication with all parts of the New England country,—with

Salem and Newburyport, with Fitchburg, with Worcester, with Providence, and with various parts of the old Plymouth colony.

For almost two hundred years New England, with its intensely serious temper, its rigid social traditions, and its instinctive belief in absolute truth, had been not only an isolated part of the world, but had itself consisted of small isolated communities. Now at a moment when, at least relatively, its material prosperity was not only greater than ever before, but probably greater than it will ever be again, the whole region was suddenly flashed into unity. It was during this period that New England produced the most remarkable literary expression which has yet declared itself in America. To say that this resulted from social and economic causes is too much; what can surely be asserted is that the highest development of intellectual life in New England coincided with its greatest material prosperity. From the time when Benjamin Franklin left Boston, where Cotton Mather was still preaching, until the days when Unitarianism broke out there, while cotton-mills sprang up on the Merrimac, Boston even in America was hardly of the first importance. At this moment it has probably ceased to be so. But during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century its economic importance was pronounced; and intellectually it was superior to any other city in America.

Unity of New England.

What happened there economically and politically, is not our immediate business. What does concern us is the intellectual outburst; and this, as we shall see, took, on the whole, a form which may best be described as renascent. In all sorts of intellectual life a new spirit declared itself; but this new spirit was more like that which aroused

old Italy to a fresh sense of civilized antiquity than like a spontaneous manifestation of native thought or feeling. In a few years New England developed a considerable political literature, of which the height was reached in formal oratory; it developed a new kind of scholarship, of which the height was reached in admirable works of history; in religion it developed Unitarianism; in philosophy, Transcendentalism; in general conduct, a tendency toward reform which deeply affected our national history; and meantime it developed the most mature school of pure letters which has yet appeared in this country. To these various phases of the New England Renaissance we may now devote ourselves in turn.

II

THE NEW ENGLAND ORATORS

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THROUGHOUT the seventeenth century, the literary expression of New England had been chiefly theological;

in the eighteenth century this expression, at least in the region of Boston, became chiefly political. In each case the dominant phase of New England expression had been decidedly serious, and had been concerned with one of the ideals most deeply associated with our ancestral language. These ideals we have broadly called those of the Bible and of the Common Law; the former incessantly reminds us that we must do right, the latter that we must maintain our rights. And they have in common another trait than either their deep association with the temper of English-speaking races or their pervasive seriousness; both are best set forth by means of public speaking.

Sermons.

From the very beginning the appetite for public discourse in New England had been correspondingly keen. In the seventeenth century a minister who preached or prayed well was sure of admiration and popularity; in the eighteenth century a similar popularity was the certain reward of a lawyer, too, who displayed oratorical power; and until long after 1800 native Yankees had a traditional liking, which they honestly believed unaffected, for hearing people talk from platforms or pulpits.

Oratory of the Revolution.

When the Revolution came, accordingly, the surest means of attaining eminence in New England was public speaking. James Otis, always a man rather of speech than of action, began the career which made his name national by his spoken argument against Writs of Assistance. The heroic memory of Joseph Warren is almost as closely associated with his oration at the Old South Church concerning the Boston Massacre as with his death at Bunker Hill. Samuel Adams, too, is remembered as eloquent; and John Adams was a skilful public speaker. There is something widely characteristic, indeed, in the

speech which Webster's eulogy of 1826 attributed to this first New England President of the United States. The famous "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish," closely imitates the harangues and speeches of classical historians. In each case the speeches may possibly have been based on some tradition of what was actually said; in each case, obeying the conventional fashion of his time, the writer—Thucydides, Livy, or Webster—puts into the mouth of a hero eloquent words which are really his own. In each case these words not only characterize the personages who are feigned to have uttered them, but as elaborately artificial pieces of rhetoric they throw light as well both on the men who composed them and on the public for which they were composed. In more than one way, we can see the speech which Webster's superb fiction of 1826 attributed to the John Adams of half a century before illustrates the New England oratory of which Adams was one of the first exponents and Webster himself the greatest.

For between Adams's early maturity and Webster's prime there was a flood of public speaking in New England, more and more punctilious and finished in form. Were oratory pure literature, indeed, and not rather related to the functions of the pulpit or the bar, we should have to linger over the American oratory of the century which followed the Revolution. In a study like ours, however, we need only glance at it; and this hasty glance shows clearly that its most eminent exponent in New England was DANIEL WEBSTER (1782–1852).

Webster

Webster's public life is a matter of familiar history. The son of a New Hampshire farmer, he graduated at Dartmouth College. He began his legal career in his na-

tive State; but before 1820 removed to Boston. Webster's active life in Massachusetts coincided with the full development of those manufacturing industries at the head of which were some of the most substantial members of the old Whig party, which for a good while controlled Massachusetts politics. Of this party Webster soon became the recognized leader, acquiring such power as no other political leader of New England has known before or since.

Daniel Webster

As an advocate at the bar, as a representative of public sentiment on memorable festal occasions, and finally as the most influential of American Senators, Webster's means of asserting himself remained the same. He had an unsurpassed power of getting up before great bodies of his fellow-citizens and talking to them in a way which should hold their attention, influence their convictions, and guide their conduct.

Webster's Speeches.

Webster's most famous occasional speeches are those at the Pilgrim anniversary (1820), at the laying of the corner stone of Bunker Hill Monument (1825), and on Adams and Jefferson (1826); his most noted legal arguments are on the Dartmouth College case (1817) and on the White Murder case (1830); his greatest political speech is his "Reply to Hayne" (1830). As one reads in chronologic order these great speeches and the others in the six volumes of Webster's collected works, one finds a gain in solidity, simplicity, and eloquence. These qualities

combined with Webster's immense physical impressiveness and his wonderful voice to make him the greatest of American orators.

It is true, however, that Webster occasionally lapsed into bulky commonplace, and that even his greatest efforts have about them an air of elaborate artificiality, though his artificiality almost always has a ring of genuineness. Webster wrote and spoke in a way which to him, as well as to the public of his time, seemed the only fit one for matters of such dignity as those with which he had to deal; and he wrote and spoke with a fervid power which any one can recognize. All the same, his style is certainly more analogous to Dr. Johnson's published prose than to those idiomatic utterances recorded by Boswell which have made Johnson immortal. If Webster's power is beyond dispute, so is his tendency to pose. This tendency he enforced, in a manner which was thoroughly acceptable to the America of his time, by an extremely elaborate rhetoric based partly on the parliamentary traditions of eighteenth century England, and partly, like those traditions themselves, on the classical oratory of Rome and Greece.

Such highly developed oratory as Webster's never grows into existence alone. Webster was only the most eminent member of a school which has left many other memories, in their own day of almost equal distinction; and as a typical New Hampshire man, indeed he was rather less representative of the Boston orators of his time than were some natives of Massachusetts.

Everett.

Of these none was more distinguished than EDWARD EVERETT (1794–1865). The son of a minister, whose father was a farmer, he took his degree at Harvard in 1811, and two years later he became for a while minister

of the Brattle Street Church in Boston. A year or so later, having been appointed professor of Greek at Harvard, he went abroad to prepare himself for his academic duties, and was among the earliest of American scholars to study at a German university. On his return from Europe he "exhibited," says Emerson,* "all the richness of a rhetoric which we have never seen rivalled in this country."

Edward Everett.

That Everett was no mere rhetorician, however, the facts of his career instantly show. Besides being preacher and college professor, he was an editor of the *North American Review;* for ten years he was a member of Congress; for four years he was governor of Massachusetts; for four more he was Minister to England; he succeeded Webster as Secretary of State; he was president of Harvard College; he was senator from Massachusetts; and in 1860 he was nominated for the vice-presidency of the United States by the party which bravely tried to avert secession. In person he embodied that dignified grace which marked the Whig gentlemen of Massachusetts; and if his sensitiveness of feeling and his formality of manner prevented him at once from popularity and from unrestrained fervor of utterance, no man of his time has been remembered with more admiration or respect. And this whole brilliant and useful career was based on consummate mastery of rhetoric.

His Career based on Mastery of Rhetoric.

* "Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England" in Emerson's *Works*, Riverside edition, vol. x, pp. 307 ff. The sentence quoted is on p. 314.

Everett's published works consist of four volumes, entitled *Orations and Speeches*, beginning with an address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College on "The Circumstances Favorable to the Progress of Literature in America," delivered in 1824, and closing with a brief address at Faneuil Hall in aid of a "Subscription to Relieve the Suffering People of Savannah," delivered on the 9th of January, 1865, less than a week before his death. Throughout these four volumes, comprising the utterances of more than forty years, every paragraph seems a studied work of art. Everett's natural feeling was warm and spontaneous; but he had acquired and he unswervingly maintained that incessant self-control which his generation held among the highest ideals of conduct. So whatever he publicly uttered, and still more whatever he suffered himself to print, was deliberately considered to the minutest detail.

The eloquence and the rhetorical skill of Webster and of Everett were the more admired in their own day for the reason that they were exercised in behalf of those political principles which then commanded the support of all conservative people in Massachusetts. So too was the eloquence of many other men, each of whom may fairly be held a master of the art of which Everett and Webster were the most eminent exponents. Even so cursory a study as ours may not neglect the name of RUFUS CHOATE (1799–1859), like Webster a graduate of Dartmouth, like Everett a lifelong reader of the classics, and for years not only eminent in public life, but acknowledged to be the most powerful advocate at the New England bar. A little later than the prime of these men there arose in Boston another generation of orators, differing from their predecessors

Choate.

both in principle and to some degree in method, who used their great powers for purposes which impressed conservative people as demagogic. Of these the most eminent were Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, and Charles Sumner. On all three we shall touch later. But we may hardly again have occasion to mention an eminent citizen of the elder type who preserved to the end the traditions of that great school of formal oratory of which he was the last survivor,—ROBERT CHARLES WINTHROP (1809–1894).

Winthrop.

With Winthrop, one may say, the oratory of New England expired. And now, as one considers its century and more of history, one discerns more and more clearly why the period in which it reached its height may best be understood when we call it a period of Renaissance. Almost from the time of the Revolution, isolated New England, like the rest of America, was awakening to a new sense of national consciousness; so the society of New England, traditionally one which venerated its leaders, looked to the men whom circumstances brought prominently forward for indubitable assertion of dignity in our national character. The professional circumstances which brought men forward were generally those of the pulpit or the bar; clergymen and lawyers accordingly found that they could no longer maintain their eminence by merely treading in the footsteps of their predecessors. Trained in our old Yankee colleges at a time when such education meant a little mathematics and a tolerable reading knowledge of the classics, these men, who felt themselves called upon to express our new nationality, turned by instinct to that mode of expression which in crude form had long been characteristic of their country. In their impulsive desire to give this a new vitality, they instinctively began to emu-

Summary.

late first the formal oratory of England, which had reached its height in the preceding century; and then, perhaps more consciously, they strove to saturate themselves with the spirit of those masterpieces of oratory which help to immortalize the inimitable literatures of Rome and of Greece.

On general principles, the world might have expected America to produce public utterances of a crudely passionate kind, marked rather by difference from what had gone before than by respect for traditional models. Instead, without a touch of affectation, our orators, obeying the genuine impulse of their nature, exerted their most strenuous energy in persistent efforts to emulate the achievements of an extremely elaborate art which had attained final excellence in the days of Cicero and Demosthenes. The oratorical models of Greece and of Rome they imitated in just such spirit as that in which the masterpieces of antique plastic art were imitated by fifteenth-century Italy. Apart from its political significance, as embodying principles which controlled the American history of their time, their work is significant in our study as proving how spontaneously the awakening national consciousness of New England strove to prove our country civilized by conscientious obedience to eldest civilized tradition.

III

THE NEW ENGLAND SCHOLARS AND HISTORIANS

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THE high development of mental activity indicated by the renascent oratory of New England was not solitary: something similar appeared at the same period in the professional scholarship of the region. From the beginning, the centre of learning there had been Harvard College, founded to perpetuate a learned ministry. This it did throughout its seventeenth-century career; and in the eighteenth century it also had the distinction of educating many lawyers and statesmen who became eminent at the time of the Revolution. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, Harvard College remained little more than a boys' school. It received pupils very young;

it gave them a fair training in Latin and Greek, a little mathematics, and a touch of theology if they so inclined; and then it sent them forth to the careers of mature life. It contented itself, in brief, with preserving the tradition of academic training planted in the days of Charles I; and this it held, in rather mediæval spirit, to be chiefly valuable as the handmaiden of theology, and later of law. One principal function of a true university—that of acquiring and publishing fresh knowledge—it had not attempted.

In the surrounding air, however, a new and fresh spirit of learning declared itself, and the leaders of this, as well as the followers, were generally either Harvard men or men who in mature life were closely allied with our oldest college. The celebrated Count Rumford, for one, a Yankee country boy, began his regular study of science by attending the lectures of Professor John Winthrop of Harvard, before the Revolution; and in spite of his permanent departure from his native country, he retained a keen interest in New England. In 1780 he had something to do with the founding in Boston of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which, with the exception of Franklin's Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, is the oldest learned society in America. For more than a century the American Academy has maintained, in its proceedings and its publications, a standard of learning recognized all over the world as excellent. Nor was it long alone. In 1791, the Massachusetts Historical Society was founded for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and publishing historical matter, chiefly relating to its ancestral Commonwealth. Like the American Academy this society still flourishes, and during its century of ex-

Growth of Science and of Learned Societies.

istence it has published a considerable amount of material, admirably set forth and often of more than local importance.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, too, certain young gentlemen of Boston, mostly graduates of Harvard and chiefly members of the learned professions, formed themselves into an Anthology Club, with the intention of conducting a literary and scholarly review. Their Anthology did not last long; but their Club developed on the one hand into the Boston Athenæum, and in 1815, on the other hand, into that periodical which long remained the serious vehicle of scholarly New England thought,—the *North American Review*. This was modelled on the great British Reviews,—the "Edinburgh" and the "Quarterly"; and under the guidance of such men as William Tudor, Edward Tyrrell Channing, Jared Sparks, James Russell Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton, and Dr. Andrew Preston Peabody, it maintained its dignity for more than fifty years. Reviews.

Though the American Academy, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenæum, and the old *North American Review* may hardly be taken as comprehensive of the new learning which was springing into life among Boston men bred at Harvard, they are especially typical of it, in the fact that none of them was indigenous; all alike were successful efforts to imitate in our independent New England certain learned institutions of Europe. What they stand for—the real motive which was in the air —was an awakening of American consciousness to the fact that serious contemporary standards existed in other countries than our own, and that our claim to respect as a civilized community could no longer be

maintained by the mere preservation of a respectable classical school for boys. Our first outbreak of the spirit of learning, indeed, was even more imitative than the contemporary literature which sprang up in New York, or than the oratory which in the same years so elaborately developed itself in Massachusetts.

It was not until a little later that the scholarly impulses of New England produced either persons or works of literary distinction; but the form which the characteristic literature of this scholarship was to take had already been indicated both by the early literary activities of this part of the country and by the nature of its most distinguished learned society. From the earliest period of Massachusetts, as we have seen, there was, along with theological writing, a considerable body of publications which may be roughly classified as historical. The *Magnalia* of Cotton Mather, for instance, the most typical literary production of seventeenth-century America, was almost as historical in impulse as it was theological. Earlier still, the most permanent literary monument of the Plymouth colony was Bradford's manuscript history; and such other manuscripts as Winthrop's history and Sewall's diary show how deeply rooted in the colony of Massachusetts too was our lasting fondness for historical record. Other than local history, indeed, seems to have interested the elder Yankees chiefly as it bore on the origins and development of New England. An extreme example of this fact is to be found in the *Chronological History of New England in the Form of Annals*, the first volume of which was published in 1736,* by the Reverend Thomas Prince

Chronicles.

* In 1755 appeared the two pamphlet numbers which make up the second volume.

(1687–1758), minister of the Old South Church. Prince had unrivalled opportunities for collecting and preserving the facts of our first century; but, having thought proper to begin his work by "an introduction, containing a brief *Epitome* of the most remarkable *Transactions and Events* ABROAD, from the CREATION," he had the misfortune to die before he had brought the chronology of New England itself to a later period than 1630. A more philosophical work than Prince's was that *History of Massachusetts*,* by THOMAS HUTCHINSON (1711–1780), which may perhaps be called the most respectable American book before the Revolution. From the foundation of the colony, in short, New England men had always felt strong interest in local affairs and traditions; and this had resulted in a general habit of collecting and sometimes of publishing accounts of what had happened in their native regions.

Prince: Hutchinson.

The temper in question is still familiar to any one who knows what pleasure native Yankees are apt to take in genealogical research. Throughout the nineteenth century it has borne fruit in those innumerable town histories which make the local records of New England so minutely accessible to all who have patience to plod through volumes of trivial detail. It may fairly be regarded as the basis in New England character of the most scholarly literature which New England has produced. For during the nineteenth century there appeared in Boston a group of historians whose work became widely and justly celebrated.

The first of these, although he made a deeper impression on the intellectual life of Boston than almost anybody else, is hardly remembered as of high literary importance. This was GEORGE TICKNOR (1791–1871), the only son of

* Vol. I, 1764; vol. II, 1767; vol. III, 1828.

Ticknor.

a prosperous Boston merchant. He was sent to Dartmouth College and after graduation prepared himself for the practice of law; but finding this uncongenial, and having in prospect fortune enough to maintain himself without a profession, he determined to devote himself to pure scholarship. In 1815 he accordingly went abroad and studied at the University of Göttingen, where Edward Everett came in the same year. These two were among the first of that distinguished and continuous line of American scholars who have supplemented their native education by enthusiastic devotion to German learning. In 1819, having returned to America, Ticknor became the first Smith Professor of the French and Spanish Languages and Belles Lettres at Harvard College; Everett at the same time began his lectures there as professor of Greek. Together they stood for the new principle that instructors ought not only to assure themselves that students have learned, but actually to teach. Everett relinquished his professorship in 1824, betaking himself to that more public career which is better remembered. Ticknor, the first Harvard professor of modern languages, retained his chair until 1835; and during this time he strenuously attempted to enlarge the office of Harvard from that of a respectable high school to that of a true university.

Besides this service to professional learning, Ticknor,

in later life, had more than any one else to do with the establishment of the Boston Public Library. Ticknor's private library was in its day among the largest and best selected on this side of the Atlantic; and his enthusiasm in the cause of learning induced him to lend his books freely to any respectable persons who satisfied him that they really wanted to use them. The result convinced him that if he could bring the American public into free contact with good literature, the general taste for good reading would increase, and the general intelligence and consequent civilization would improve, in accordance with the aspirations of human nature toward what is best. Thus the idea of a great public library grew in his mind; and in 1852 he was an eager leader in the movement which established in Boston the first and best public circulating library of America.

As the first learned professor of modern languages in an American university, as the first exponent in our university life of continental scholarship, as the earliest of Americans to attempt the development of an American college into a modern university, and finally as the chief founder of the chief public library in the United States, Ticknor's claims upon popular memory are remarkable. Ticknor himself, however, would probably have regarded as his principal claim to recognition the *History of Spanish Literature* (1849). From the time of his first journey abroad he had been attracted to Spanish matters; his professorship at Harvard, too, was partly devoted to Spanish literature; and incidentally he collected a Spanish library said to be the most important outside of Spain itself. It was not until thirty years after he began the work of the Smith professorship that he published his history. For years this book,

History of Spanish Literature.

which involved untiring investigation of the best German type, remained authoritative and did much to establish throughout the learned world the position of American scholarship. On the other hand, it is not interesting. Ticknor's mind was rather acquisitive and retentive than creative. His work is that of a thoroughly trained scholar; of a man, too, so sincerely devoted to literature that, as we have seen, his services to literary culture in America can hardly be overestimated; of a man, furthermore, whose letters and journals show him, though deficient in humor, to have had at command an agreeable and fluent every-day style. When all is said, however, the *History of Spanish Literature* is heavily respectable reading. A more winning example of Ticknor's literary power is the life of his friend and contemporary, Prescott, which he published in 1864, five years after Prescott's death.

About the time when Ticknor began his teaching in the Smith professorship at Harvard, a subsequently famous declaration of the Unitarian faith was made in the sermon preached at Baltimore by William Ellery Channing, on the occasion of the ordination to the Unitarian ministry of a man no longer in his first youth, JARED SPARKS (1789–1866). Sparks's ministerial career was not very long. In 1824 he became an editor of the *North American Review*, and for the rest of his life he remained in New England. From 1839 to 1849 he was professor of history at Harvard; from 1849 to 1853 he was President of the College; and after his resignation he continued resident in Cambridge until his death.

Jared Sparks.

Sparks left behind him no original writings which have survived; but his special services to historical study in New England were almost as great as were those of Ticknor

to the study of modern languages and to the modern spirit in learning. In 1829 he began to issue *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* in twelve volumes. Between 1834 and 1840 he collected and issued the first authoritative editions of the writings of Washington and of Franklin. In these works, although he permitted himself to correct the spelling and grammar of documents, he showed himself to be scrupulously exact in statements of fact and untiring in methodical accumulation of material. In 1834 appeared the first volume of his *Library of American Biography*, the publication of which continued until 1848. In each of the twenty-five volumes are the lives of three or four eminent Americans, generally written by enthusiastic young scholars, but all subjected to the editorial supervision of Sparks, who thus brought into being a still valuable biographical dictionary.

Such work as this clearly evinces wide and enthusiastic interest in the study and writing of history. Though not educated in Germany, Sparks, with his untiring energy in the accumulation and arrangement of material, and his unusual power of making other people work systematically, was very like a sound German scholar. He really established a large historical factory; with skilled help, he collected all the raw material he could find; and he turned out something like a finished article in lengths to suit,—somewhat as his commercial contemporaries spun excellent cotton. In a mechanical way his work was admirable; he really advanced New England scholarship.

Prescott.

If neither Ticknor nor Sparks contributed to permanent literature, the names of both are closely connected with that of the first man in New England who wrote history in a spirit as literary as that of Gibbon or Macaulay. This

is the personal friend whose biography by Ticknor is the most sympathetic work which Ticknor has left us—William Hickling Prescott (1796–1859). In the first volume of Sparks's *Library of American Biography*, published in 1834, is Prescott's "Life of Charles Brockden Brown," written in the somewhat florid style then fashionable. At the time when this was published, Prescott was known as a gentleman of scholarly temper and comfortable fortune, approaching the age of forty, whose life had probably been ruined by an accident at college. The students of his day had been boisterous in table manners; and on one occasion somebody thoughtlessly threw a piece of bread across the dining-room, striking Prescott in the eye. This resulted in so serious an injury that he could never read again, and that he could write only with the aid of a machine composed of parallel wires by means of which he painfully guided his pencil.

Ferdinand and Isabella.

In spite of these obstacles he quietly set to work on his *Ferdinand and Isabella*. As the book approached completion, he was beset with doubts of its merit. Unable to use his eyes, he had been compelled to collect his material through the aid of readers, and then to compose it in his head before he felt prepared to dictate it; and he was so far from satisfied with the result of his labors that he hesitated about publication. An anecdote which Ticknor relates of this moment is characteristic of the man and of his time. "He consulted with his father, as he always did when he doubted in relation to matters of consequence. His father not only advised the publication, but told him that 'the man who writes a book which he is afraid to publish is a coward.'" So in 1838 *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic* was published; and

at last New England had produced a ripe historian. The *Conquest of Mexico* followed in 1843, the *Conquest of Peru* in 1847, and Prescott was still engaged on his *Life of Philip II* when, in 1859, he died of apoplexy.

Since Prescott's time, the tendency has been more and more to regard history as a matter rather of science than literature; the fashion of style, too, has greatly changed from that which prevailed when New England found the model of rhetorical excellence in its formal oratory. Accordingly, Prescott's work is often mentioned as rather romantic than scholarly. In this view there is some justice. The scholarship of his day had not collected anything like the material now at the disposal of students; and Prescott's infirmity of sight could not help further limiting the range of his investigation. His style, too, always clear and readable, and often vivid, is somewhat florid and generally colored by what seems a conviction that historical writers should maintain the dignity of history. For all this, his works so admirably combine substantial truth with literary spirit that they are more useful than many which are respected as more authoritative. What he tells us is the result of thoughtful study; and he tells it in a manner so clear, and so urbane, that when you have read one of his chapters you remember without effort what it is about. With a spirit as modern as Ticknor's, and with much of the systematic scholarship of Sparks, Prescott combined unusual literary power.

Wm. H. Prescott

Style.

For our purposes, however, the most notable phase of his work is to be found in the subjects to which he turned. At first his aspirations to historical writing took a general form. At last, after hesitation as to what he should write about,* he was most attracted by the same romantic Spain which a few years before had captivated Irving. Sitting blind in his New England of the early Renaissance, whose outward aspect was so staidly decorous, he found his imagination stirred by those phases of modern history which were most splendidly unlike his ancestral inexperience. He chose first that climax of Spanish history when in the same year, 1492, native Spaniards triumphantly closed their eight hundred years of conflict against the Moorish invaders, and the voyage of Columbus opened to Spain those new empires of which for a while our own New England had seemed likely to be a part. Then he found deeply stirring the fatal conflict between Spanish invaders and the civilizations of prehistoric America. Finally, having written of Spanish power at its zenith, he began to record the tale of its stormy sunset in the reign of Philip II. So the impulse of this first of our standard historians seems very like that of Irving. Irving and Prescott alike, living far from all traces of antique splendor, found their strongest stimulus in the most brilliant pageant of the romantic European past.

Renascent Quality.

There were New England historians, to be sure, who wrote about our own country. The most eminent of these was GEORGE BANCROFT (1800–1891), who graduated at Harvard, and like Ticknor and Everett was a student in

Bancroft.

* See his *Life* by Ticknor, pp. 70–76. The decision was much influenced by Prescott's hearing Ticknor read aloud his lectures on Spanish literature.

Germany. Afterwards he was for a while a tutor at Harvard, and later a master of the celebrated Round Hill school in Western Massachusetts. Not long afterwards he became a public man; he was Collector of the Port of Boston, he was Secretary of the Navy under President Polk, and subsequently he was Minister both to England and to Germany. He left New England at about the age of forty and afterwards resided chiefly in Washington. In 1834, the year in which Prescott's "Life of Brockden Brown" was published, appeared, too, the first volume of Bancroft's *History of the United States*, a work on which he was steadily engaged for fifty-one years, and which he left unfinished. The dominant politics of New England had been Federalist; Bancroft's history sympathized with the Democratic party. In consequence, sharp fault was found with him, and he was never on cordial terms with the other New England historians; but he persevered in writing history all his life, and, for all the diffuse floridity of his style, he is still an authority. Partly to correct Bancroft, RICHARD HILDRETH (1807–1865) wrote a *History of the United States* (1851–1856) from the Federalist point of view; and Dr. JOHN GORHAM PALFREY (1796–1881) was for years engaged on his minute but lifeless *History of New England* (1858–1890). In these, however, and in the other historians who were writing of our own country, there was less imaginative vigor and far less literary power than in Prescott or in the two younger New England historians whose works are indubitably literature.

Hildreth; Palfrey.

The first of these younger men was JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY (1814–1877). He graduated at Harvard; he studied for a while in Germany, where he began in youth a lifelong friendship with his fellow-student Count Bis-

Motley.

marck; and toward the end of his life he lived mostly in Europe. At one time he was Minister to Austria, and later to England. As early as 1839 he wrote *Morton's Hope*, a novel, which deserved its lack of success. A little later he anonymously wrote for the *North American Review* an article on Peter the Great which attracted much favorable attention; but it was not until 1856 that he published his first permanent work, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*. This was followed, between 1861 and 1868, by his *History of the United Netherlands*, and finally in 1874 by his *John of Barneveld*.

Temper and Style.

Motley's historical work is obviously influenced by the vividly picturesque writings of Carlyle. It is clearly influenced, too, by intense sympathy with that liberal spirit which he believed to characterize the people of the Netherlands during their prolonged conflict with Spain. From these traits result several obvious faults. In trying to be vivid, he becomes artificial. In the matter of character, too, his Spaniards are apt to be intensely black, and his Netherlanders ripe for heaven. Yet, for all this partisan temper, Motley was so industrious in accumulating material, so untiring in his effort vividly to picture historic events, and so heartily in sympathy with his work, that he is almost always interesting. What most deeply stirred him was his belief in the abstract right of man to political liberty; and this he wished to celebrate with epic spirit. Belief and spirit alike were characteristically American; in the history of his own country there was abundant evidence of both. The assertion of liberty which finally stirred his imagination to the point of expression, however, was not that of his American forefathers, but the earlier one, more brilliantly picturesque, and above all more

remote, which had marked the history of a foreign race in Europe. Even as late as Motley's time, in short, the historical imagination of New England was apt to seek its material abroad.

Parkman.

The latest and most mature of our New England historians was more national. FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823–1893), the son of a Unitarian minister, was born at Boston. He graduated at Harvard in 1844. By that time his health had already shown signs of infirmity; and this was so aggravated by imprudent physical exposure during a journey* across the continent shortly after graduation that he was a lifelong invalid. Threatened for a full half-century with ruinous malady of both brain and body, he persisted, by sheer force of will, with literary plans which he had formed almost in boyhood. His imagination was first kindled by the forests of our ancestral continent. These excited his interest in the native races of America; and this, in turn, obviously brought him to the frequent alliances between the French and the Indians during the first two centuries of our American history. His lifelong work finally resulted in those volumes† which record from beginning to end the struggles for the possession of North America between the French, with their Indian allies, and that English-speaking race whose final victory determined the course of our national history.

Parkman's works really possess great philosophic in-

* Recorded in *The California and Oregon Trail*, 1849.

† *The History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac*, 1851; *The Pioneers of France in the New World*, 1865; *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century*, 1867; *The Discovery of the Great West*, 1869; *The Old Régime in Canada*, 1874; *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV*, 1877; *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 1884; *A Half-Century of Conflict*, 1892.

terest. With full sympathy for both sides, with untiring industry in the accumulation of material, with good sense so judicial as to forbid him the vagaries of preconception, and with a literary sensitiveness which made his later style a model of sound prose, he set forth the struggles which decided the political future of America. Moved to this task by an impulse rather romantic than scientific, to be sure, gifted with a singularly vivid imagination, too careful a scholar to risk undue generalization, and throughout life so hampered by illness that he could very rarely permit himself prolonged mental effort, Parkman sometimes appeared chiefly a writer of romantic narrative. As you grow familiar with his work, however, you feel it so true that you can infuse it with philosophy for yourself. It is hardly too much to say that his writings afford as sound a basis for historical philosophizing as does great fiction for philosophizing about human nature.

Francis Parkman

Summary. Parkman brings the story of renascent scholarship in New England almost to our own day. When the nineteenth century began, our scholarship was merely a traditional memory of classical learning, generally treated as the handmaiden either of professional theology or of professional law. When the spirit of a new life began to declare itself here, and people grew aware of contemporary foreign achievement, there came first a little group of men who studied in Europe and brought home the full spirit

of that continental scholarship which during the present century has so dominated learning in America. As this spirit began to express itself in literary form, it united with our ancestral fondness for historic records to produce, just after the moment when formal oratory most flourished here, an eminent school of historical literature. Most of this history, however, deals with foreign subjects. The historians of New England were generally at their best when stirred by matters remote from their native inexperience.

Considering the relation of this school of history to the historical literature of England, one is inevitably reminded that the greatest English history, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, first appeared in the very year of our Declaration of Independence. In one aspect, of course, the temper of Gibbon is as far from romantic as possible. He is the first, and in certain aspects the greatest, of modern philosophical historians; and his style has all the formality of the century during which he wrote. In another aspect the relation of Gibbon's history to the England which bred him seems very like that of our New England histories to the country and the life which bred their writers. Gibbon and our own historians alike turned to a larger and more splendid field than was afforded by their national annals. Both alike were distinctly affected by an alert consciousness of what excellent work had been done in contemporary foreign countries. Both carefully expressed themselves with conscientious devotion to what they believed the highest literary canons. Both produced work which has lasted not only as history but as literature too. Gibbon wrote in the very year when America declared her independence of England; Prescott began his

Gibbon.

work in Boston nearly sixty years later. So there is an aspect in which our historical literature seems to lag behind that of the mother country much as Irving's prose—contemporary with the full outburst of nineteenth-century romanticism in England—lags behind the prose of Goldsmith.

Very cursory, all this; and there can be no doubt that the historians of New England, like the New England orators, might profitably be made the subject of minute and interesting separate study. Our own concern, however, is chiefly with pure letters. Before we can deal with them intelligently we must glance at still other aspects of renascent New England. We have glanced at its oratory and at its scholarship. We must now turn to its religion and its philosophy.

IV

UNITARIANISM

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General References: G. W. Cooke, *Unitarianism in America*, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1902; *A. P. Peabody, "The Unitarians in Boston," Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, III, Chapter xi; James Freeman Clarke's *Autobiography*, Boston: Houghton, 1891; G. E. Ellis, *Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy*, Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co., 1857.

Channing

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Biography and Criticism: W. H. Channing, *The Life of William Ellery Channing*, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1880; J. W. Chadwick, *William Ellery Channing*, Boston: Houghton, 1903.

Selections: Duyckinck, II, 22–24; Griswold's *Prose*, 162–168; Stedman, 85–87; *Stedman and Hutchinson, V, 3–19.

Ripley

The life of George Ripley, whose works are no longer in print, has been written for the American Men of Letters Series by O. B. Frothingham (Boston: Houghton, 1883). There are selections from Ripley in Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 100–106.

Reaction from Calvinism.

Marked as was the change in the oratory and the scholarship of New England during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the change in the dominant religious views of a community which had always been dominated by religion was more marked still. From the beginning till after the Revolution, the creed of New England had been the Calvinism of the Puritans. In 1809, William Ellery

Channing, then a minister twenty-nine years old, wrote of this old faith:

> " Whosoever will consult the famous Assembly's Catechisms and Confession, will see the peculiarities of the system in all their length and breadth of deformity. A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terror, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries, to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity."

The New Theology.

"How mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity!" You will be at pains to find nine words which shall more thoroughly express the change which the Renaissance brought to the leading religious spirits of Boston.

The resulting alteration in dogmatic theology has given to the new school of New England divines the name of Unitarians. According to the old creed, the divine character of Christ was essential to redemption; without his superhuman aid all human beings were irrevocably doomed. But the moment you assumed human nature to contain adequate seeds of good, the necessity for a divine Redeemer disappeared. Accordingly the New England Unitarians discerned, singly and alone, God, who had made man in his image. One almost perfect image they recognized in Jesus Christ; a great many inferior but still indubitable ones they found actually living about them.

Although this radical change in theology was what gave Unitarianism its name, the underlying feeling which gave it being had little concern with mystic dogmas. Whatever the philosophy of primitive Christianity, the philosophy of traditional Christianity had for centuries taught the depravity of human nature; this dogma the Puritans had brought to New England, where they had uncompromisingly preserved it. Now, whatever your philosophy,

this dogma does account for such social phenomena as occur in densely populated lands where economic pressure is strong. In our own great cities you need a buoyant spirit and a hopefully unobservant eye to perceive much besides evil; and if you compare Boston or New York with London or Paris, you can hardly avoid discerning, beneath the European civilization which is externally lovelier than ours, depths of evil to which we have hardly yet sunk. The Europe of Calvin's time seems on the whole even more pervasively wicked; and more wicked still seems that decadent Roman Empire where Augustine formulated the dogmas which at last Channing so unfalteringly set aside.

Simplicity of American Life and Character.

We need hardly remind ourselves, however, that up to the time of Channing the history of America, and particularly of New England, had been a history of national inexperience. Compared with other races, the people of New England, released for generations from the pressure of dense European life, found a considerable degree of goodness surprisingly practicable. This social fact resembled a familiar domestic one: an eldest child is apt to be angelic until some little brother gets big enough to interfere with him; and if by chance no little brother appears, the angelic traits will very likely persist until the child goes to school or otherwise comes in contact with external life. Up to the days of Channing himself, the Yankee race may be likened to a Puritan child gravely playing alone.

So even by the time of Edwards, Calvinistic dogma and national inexperience were unwittingly at odds. Our glances at subsequent American letters must have shown how steadily the native human nature of America continued

to express itself in forms which could not reasonably be held to be evil. In New York, for example, the first third of the nineteenth century produced Brockden Brown and Irving and Cooper and Bryant; later came Poe, Willis, and the Knickerbocker School. Not eternally memorable, even the worst of these does not seem a bit wicked. Turning to certain phases of New England at about the same time, we saw in its public life the patriotic intensity of Webster and the classical personality of Everett establishing a tradition of sustained dignity which passed only with Robert Charles Winthrop, who lies beneath the well-earned epitaph, "Eminent as a scholar, an orator, a statesman, and a philanthropist,—above all, a Christian." And when we came to the scholarship of New England, we found it finally ripening into the dignified pages of Ticknor, of Prescott, of Motley, and of Parkman.

In a society like this, Calvinistic dogma seems constantly further from truth, as taught by actual life. However familiar to experience in dense old worlds, habitually abominable conduct was rather strange to the national inexperience of America, and particularly of renascent New England. Even during the eighteenth century, indeed, a considerable number of ministers, particularly of the region about Boston, gradually and insensibly relaxed the full rigor of Calvinism.

Beginnings of Unitarianism in Massachusetts.

Two events will serve to typify this change. In 1785, Dr. James Freeman, minister of King's Chapel, being compelled to revise the Anglican Prayer Book, found himself conscientiously disposed so to alter the liturgy as considerably to modify the dogma of the Trinity. The liturgy thus made, which is sometimes held to mark the beginning of Boston Unitarianism, differs from the forms

which it displaced in its tendency to regard Christ as only an excellent earthly manifestation of God's creative power, a being whom men need only as an example not as a redeemer. About twenty years after this King's Chapel liturgy, Harvard College succumbed to the religious tendency which that liturgy embodies. The chief theological chair at Harvard, the Hollis Professorship of Divinity, which up to 1805 had remained a seat of Calvinistic doctrine, was given in that year to the Reverend Henry Ware, an avowed Unitarian. The orthodox party at Harvard had opposed Ware with all their might; so when he was made Hollis Professor, the ancestral college of Puritan New England was finally handed over to Unitarianism, which until very recent years remained its acknowledged faith.

Unitarianism at Harvard.

Defeated at Harvard, the orthodox party retreated to Andover, where they founded the Theological Seminary which defended old Calvinism in a region abandoned to its enemies. Nowadays the whole thing is fading into history, but at first the conflict was heart-breaking. For on each side faith was fervent; and if the conquering Unitarians believed themselves to be destroying pernicious and ugly heresy, the Calvinists believed just as sincerely that in angelic guise the devil had possessed himself of New England. In their mood, there was a consequent depth of despair to which the Unitarians have hardly done full justice. To the Unitarian mind there has never been any valid reason why good men of other opinions than theirs should not enjoy everlasting bliss; but the very essence of the Calvinists' creed condemned to everlasting woe every human being who rejected the divinely revealed truth of their grimly uncompromising system.

To suppose, however, that the founders of Unitarianism

Unitarian Doctrine.

meant to be unchristian would be totally to misunderstand them. They revered the Scriptures as profoundly as ever Calvinists did. The difference was that they discerned in Scripture no such teaching as the experience of old-world centuries had crystallized into Calvinistic dogma. In the first place, they found in the Bible no passages which necessarily involved the dogma of the Trinity. There might be puzzling sentences; but there were also clear, constant statements that there is one God, who made man in His image. This assertion, they held, amounts to proof that men are the children of God, and that they have thus inherited from God the divine faculties of reason and of conscience. When in the Bible there are puzzling texts, or when in life there are puzzling moments, we need only face them with conscientiously reasonable temper. If we are truly made in the image of God, we shall thus reach true conclusions; and meanwhile to guide our way, God has made that most excellent of his creatures, Jesus Christ.

Wm E Channing

Channing.

From this state of faith there naturally resulted in Unitarianism a degree of spiritual freedom which allowed each minister to proclaim whatever truth presented itself to his conscience. Unitarianism has never formulated a creed. It has tacitly accepted, however, certain traditions which have been classically set forth by its great apostle, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780–1842). He was born at New-

port; he took his degree at Harvard in 1798; and from 1803 to 1840 he was minister at the Federal Street Church in Boston.

Unitarian Christianity.

In 1819, he preached at Baltimore, on the occasion of the ordination of Jared Sparks, his famous sermon* on Unitarian Christianity. He took his text from 1 Thess. v. 21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." His first point is that "we regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ." The Scriptures, he goes on to say, must be interpreted by the light of reason. So, applying reason to Scripture, he deduces in the first place the doctrine of God's unity, "that there is one God, and one only;" secondly, that "Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God;" thirdly, that "God is morally perfect;" fourthly, that "Jesus was sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness;" and, fifthly, that "all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience."

Human nature, Channing holds, is thus essentially good; man is made in the image of God, and all man need do is to follow the light which God has given him. The greatest source of that light, of course, is Christ. Whether Christ was literally the son of God or not makes no difference: he walked the earth; he was the most perfect of men; and we can follow him. He was human and so are we. In earthly

* *Works*, Boston and New York, 1853, vol. III, pp. 59–103.

life he could avoid damnation, and all we need do is to behave as nearly like him as we can. If the false teachings of an outworn heresy make all this reasonable truth seem questionable, look about you. Do your friends deserve, as in that sermon of Edwards's, to be held suspended by a spider-like thread over a fiery furnace into which they may justly be cast at any moment; or rather, for all their faults and errors, do they not merit eternal mercy? So if all of us try to do our best, is there any reasonable cause for fearing that everything shall not ultimately go right? The old Unitarians looked about them and honestly found human nature reassuring.

Unitarianism contrasted with Calvinism.

What finally distinguishes early Unitarianism from the Calvinism which it supplanted, is this respect for what is good in human nature as contrasted with the Calvinistic insistence on what is bad. What is good needs encouragement; what is bad needs checking. What is good merits freedom; what is bad demands control. Obedience to authority, the Calvinists held, may reveal in you the tokens of salvation; spiritual freedom, the Unitarians maintained, must result in spiritual growth. For a dogmatic dread they substituted an illimitable hope. Evil and sin, sorrow and weakness, they did not deny; but trusting in the infinite goodness of God, they could not believe evil or sin, the sorrows or the weaknesses of humanity, to be more than passing shadows. Inspired with this newly hopeful spirit, they held their way through the New England whose better sort were content for half a century to follow them. Personally these early leaders of Unitarianism were, as any list* of their names will

* Such, for example, as that in the article on "Unitarianism in Boston," contributed by Dr. Andrew P. Peabody to Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, Vol. III, Chap. xi.

show, a company of such sweet, pure, noble spirits as must arouse in men who dwell with them a deep respect for human nature. In them the national inexperience of America permitted almost unrestrained the development of a moral purity which to those who possess it makes the grim philosophy of damnation seem an ill-conceived nursery tale.

The Unitarianism of New England, of course, was not unique either theologically or philosophically. In its isolated home, however, it developed one feature which distinguishes its early career from similar phases of religious history elsewhere. The personal purity and moral beauty of its leaders combined with their engaging theology to effect the rapid social conquest of the whole region about Boston. We have seen how King's Chapel and Harvard College passed into Unitarian hands. The same was true of nearly all the old Puritan churches. The First Church of Boston, John Cotton's, became Unitarian; so did the Second Church, which throughout their lives the Mathers had held as such a stronghold of orthodoxy; so did various other New England churches.

The Social Result.

This general conquest of ecclesiastical strongholds by the Unitarians deeply affected the whole structure of Massachusetts society. Elsewhere in America, perhaps, and surely in England, Unitarianism has generally presented itself as dissenting dissent, and has consequently been exposed to the kind of social disfavor which aggressive radicalism is apt to involve. In the isolated capital of isolated New England, on the other hand, where two centuries had established such a rigid social system, the capture of the old churches meant the capture, too, of almost every social stronghold. In addition to its inherent charm, the

early Unitarianism of Massachusetts was strengthened by all the force of fashion: whoever clung to the older faith did so at his social peril. This fact is nowhere more evident than in the history of New England letters. Almost everybody who attained literary distinction in New England during the nineteenth century was either a Unitarian or closely associated with Unitarian influences.

V

TRANSCENDENTALISM

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THE DIAL

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MARGARET FULLER

There is no collected edition of Margaret Fuller's works. For a list of the separate volumes, which are now out of print, see Foley, 100–101. The life of Margaret Fuller has been written by Thomas Wentworth Higginson (Boston: Houghton, 1884) for the American Men of Letters series. Selections from Margaret Fuller are in Duyckinck, II, 527–528; Griswold's *Prose*, 538–539; *Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 520–527.

BROOK FARM

Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors*, New York: Macmillan, 1900.

Though we have followed the oratory, the scholarship, and the Unitarianism of New England almost to the present time, there has been reason for considering them before the other phases of Renaissance in that isolated region where the nineteenth century produced such a change. At various times we have touched on the fact that the period from 1798 to 1832—marked in England by every-

thing between the *Lyrical Ballads* and the death of Scott, and in America by all the New York literature from Brockden Brown to Bryant—really comprised an epoch in the literary history of both countries. It was during this period that the three phases of intellectual life which we have now considered fully declared themselves in New England; and in these years nothing else of equal importance developed there.

Revolutionary Spirit.

The very mention of the dates in question should remind us that throughout the English-speaking world the revolutionary spirit was in the air. The essence of this spirit is its fervid faith in the excellence of human nature; let men be freed from all needless control, it holds, and they may be trusted to work out their salvation. In the old world, where the force of custom had been gathering for centuries, the speech and behavior of enfranchised humanity were apt to take extravagant form. In America, on the other hand, where the one thing which had been most lacking was the semblance of polite civilization, the very impulse which in Europe showed itself destructive appeared in a form which at first makes it hard to recognize.

One need not ponder long, however, to feel, even in this staid new America, a note as fresh as was the most extravagant revolutionary expression in Europe. Our elaborately rhetorical oratory, to be sure, and our decorous scholarship, seem on the surface far from revolutionary; and so does the gently insignificant literature which was contemporary with them a bit further south. Yet all alike were as different from anything which America had uttered before as was the poetry of Wordsworth or of Shelley from what had previously been known in England.

When we came to the Unitarianism of New England, the revolutionary spirit showed itself more plainly. The creed of Channing was of a kind which, except for the unusual chance of immedite social dominance, might almost at once have revealed its disintegrant character.

But the enfranchised human nature of New England at first expressed itself in no more appalling forms than the oratory of Webster or of Everett; than the Anthology Club, the Boston Athenæum, and the *North American Review;* than the saintly personality and the hopeful exhortations of Channing. Under such mildly revolutionary influences as these the new generation of Boston grew up, which was to find expression a few years later.

In all such considerations as this there is danger of taking consecutive phases of development too literally. To say that Unitarianism caused the subsequent manifestation of free thought in New England would be too much; but no one can doubt that the world-wide revolutionary spirit, of which the first New England manifestation was the religious revolution effected by Unitarianism, impelled the following generation to that outbreak of intellectual and spiritual anarchy which is generally called Transcendentalism.

What Transcendentalism taught.

This queerly intangible Transcendentalism can best be understood by recurring to the text of Channing's celebrated sermon on Unitarian Christianity. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Prove all things; do not accept tradition; scrutinize whatever presents itself to you. If evil, cast it aside; if good, cherish it as a gift of God. To this principle Channing adhered all his life; but Channing's life was essentially clerical; it was that of a conscientious and disinterested religious

teacher, whose great personal authority was strengthened by rare purity of nature. Educated in something like the old school of theology, he generally consecrated his devout boldness of thought to religious matters.

Revolutionary Spirit of Channing's Doctrines.

In the generation which grew up under the influence of which Channing is the most distinguished type, the revolutionary spirit declared itself more plainly. The traditional education of New England had been confined to theology, to classics and mathematics, and to the Common Law. It had indulged itself in speculative philosophy only so far as that philosophy aided theology or jurisprudence. Meanwhile it had paid little attention to the modern literature even of England, and none at all to that of other languages than English. Obviously there were many things in this world which intelligent young Yankees might advantageously prove, with a view to discovering whether they were worth holding fast. To say that they did so in obedience to Channing's specific teachings would be mistaken; but certainly in obedience to the same motive which induced his choice of that Thessalonian text, the more active and vigorous young minds of New England attacked, wherever they could find them, the records of human wisdom. They wished to make up their minds as to what they believed about everything and to do so with no more deference to any authority than that authority seemed rationally to deserve.

The name commonly given to the unsystematized results at which they arrived—widely differing with every individual—is apt. However they differed, these impulsive and untrained philosophical thinkers of renascent New England were idealists. With the aid of reading as wide as their resources would allow, they endeavored to give

themselves an account of what the universe really means. They became aware that our senses perceive only the phenomena of life, and that behind these phenomena, beyond the range of human senses, lurk things not phenomenal. The evolutionary philosophy which has followed theirs holds a similar conception; it divides all things into two groups,—the phenomenal or knowable, concerning which our knowledge can be tested by observation or experiment; and the unknowable, concerning which no observation or experiment can prove anything. With scientific hardness of head evolutionary philosophy consequently confines its energies to phenomena. With unscientific enthusiasm for freedom the first enfranchised thinkers of New England troubled themselves little about phenomena, and devoted their energies to thinking and talking about that great group of undemonstrable truths which must always transcend human experience. In so doing, we can see now, they followed an instinct innate in their race. They were descended from two centuries of Puritanism; and though the Puritans exerted their philosophic thought within dogmatically fixed limits, they were intense idealists too. Their whole temperamental energy was concentrated in efforts definitely to perceive absolute truths quite beyond the range of any earthly senses. The real distinction between the Puritan idealists and the Transcendental idealists of the nineteenth century proves little more than that the latter discarded all dogmatic limit. Obey yourself, they said, and you need have no fear. All things worth serious interest transcend human experience; but a trustworthy clew to them is to be found in the unfathomable excellence of human minds, souls, and spirits.

Idealism.

Though very possibly no single Transcendentalist would have accepted so baldly stated a creed, some such system may be conceived as the ideal toward which Transcendentalists generally tended. With a temper which, however it began, soon developed into this hopeful, impalpable philosophy, the more ardent youths who grew up in Boston when its theology was dominated by Unitarianism, and when its scholarship was at last so enlarged as to include the whole range of human learning, faced whatever human records they could find, to prove and to hold fast those which were good.

Three Influences upon New England Thought.

The influences thus brought to bear on New England were almost innumerable, but among them two or three were specially evident. The most important was probably German thought, at a time when German philosophy was most metaphysical and German literature most romantic. This, indeed, had had great influence on contemporary England. No two men of letters in the nineteenth century more evidently affected English thought than Coleridge and Carlyle; and both were saturated with German philosophy. To New England these influences swiftly spread. In 1800, it has been said, hardly a German book could be found in Boston. Before Channing died, in 1842, you could find in Boston few educated people who could not talk about German philosophy, German literature, and German music.* Another thing which appears very strongly in Transcendental writings is the influence of French eclectic philosophy. At one time the

* George Ripley started in 1838 a series of *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, which greatly quickened New England thought by introducing translations of Jouffroy, De Wette, Cousin, Goethe, Schiller, and other French and German writers.

names of Jouffroy and Cousin were as familiar to Yankee ears as were those of Locke or Descartes or Kant. Perhaps more heartily still this whole school of enthusiastic seekers for truth welcomed that wide range of modern literature, English and foreign alike, which was at last thrown open by such scholars as Ticknor, Longfellow, and Lowell.

For this almost riotous delight in pure literature there was a reason now long past. The Puritans generally had such conscientious objections to fine art that only at the moment to which we are now come could the instinct of native New England for culture conscientiously be satisfied. The Renaissance of New England, therefore, was in no aspect more truly renascent than in the unfeigned eagerness with which it welcomed the newly discovered fine arts. The Transcendental youth of New England delighted in excellent modern literature and music as unaffectedly as fifteenth-century Italians delighted in the freshly discovered manuscripts of classic Greek.

The Dial.

In one way or another this Transcendental movement affected almost all the ardent natures of New England from 1825 to 1840. In that year it found final expression in the *Dial*, a quarterly periodical which flourished until 1844. Its first editor was among the most characteristic figures of Transcendentalism. This was a woman, regarded in her own time as the prophetess of the new movement, and prevented by a comparatively early death from struggling through days when the movement had spent its force.

Margaret Fuller.

Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810–1850) was the daughter of an eccentric but very assertive citizen of Cambridge. Educated by her father according to his

own ideas, she was much overstimulated in youth. She became editor of the *Dial* in 1840. In 1842 she relinquished the editorship to Emerson, and removed to New York. Horace Greeley, whose sympathy with New England reformers was always encouraging, had invited her to become the literary critic of the *New York Tribune.* A little later she strayed to Italy, where, in the revolutionary times of 1847, she married a gentleman named Ossoli, an Italian patriot some years younger than herself. She was in Rome during the siege of 1848, and two years later started for America with her husband, virtually an exile, and her child. The ship on which they were journeying was wrecked off Fire Island; all three were lost. In 1839 Margaret Fuller had translated Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe;* later she published *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) and *Papers on Literature and Art* (1846). And, as we have seen, she was the first editor of the *Dial.*

Purpose of the Dial.

The precise purpose of the *Dial* is hard to state; it belongs with that little company of short-lived periodicals which now and then endeavor to afford everybody a full opportunity to say anything. The deepest agreement of Transcendentalism was in the conviction that the individual has a natural right to believe for himself and freely to express his belief. In a community so dominated by tradition as New England, meanwhile, a community of which the most characteristic periodical up to this time had been the *North American Review,* freedom of speech in print, though not theoretically denied, was hardly practicable. With a mission little more limited than this ideal of freedom, the *Dial* started. "I would not have it too purely literary," Emerson wrote to Margaret Fuller. "I

wish that we might make a journal so broad and great in its survey that it should lead the opinion of this generation on every great interest . . . and publish chapters on every head in the whole art of living."

Though the *Dial* was impractical, never circulated much, and within four years came to a hopeless financial end, its pages are at once more interesting and more sensible than tradition has represented them. Of the writers, to be sure, few have proved immortal. Bronson Alcott and Theodore Parker seem fading with Margaret Fuller into mere memories; and George Ripley has become more nebulous still. But Thoreau was of the company; and so was Emerson, who bids fair to survive the rest much as Shakspere has survived the other Elizabethan dramatists.

Minor Transcendentalists.

Emerson, Thoreau, and some others of the Transcendental group we shall consider in later chapters; but at this point we must very briefly glance at some of their minor literary contemporaries. One was the eccentric Jones Very (1813–1880), licensed to preach, but never ordained, a few of whose poems show something near genius. Another was Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892), painter and poet, whose *Last of the Huggermuggers* (1856) used to be a favorite book with children. Larger figures in the group were William Henry Channing (1810–1884) and William Ellery Channing, the younger (1818–

1891); yet neither is generally remembered very distinctly. They were nephews of the Unitarian apostle; and one of them was the author of the familiar line,

"If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea."

Far more noteworthy is the Reverend James Freeman Clarke (1810–1888), pastor from 1841 until 1888 of the Church of the Disciples, in Boston, a potent advocate of antislavery, a stout supporter of all rational measures of reform, a fearless theologian, and author, among other writings, of *Ten Great Religions* (1871). His contributions to the *Dial* are chiefly in verse, a fact which is deeply characteristic of the period. People who were later apt to express themselves in prose were then moved to write in verse, usually ephemeral. Among them were Miss Elizabeth Peabody, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Orestes Brownson. For our purpose we need mention no more names. These people lived and helped to make the Transcendental movement possible; what they wrote did not much affect the history of pure letters. Above these rises Emerson, a Transcendentalist with a lasting message. But to him we shall turn in our next chapter.

Significance of the Dial.

That the *Dial* shows Emerson's relation to his fellow Transcendentalists is perhaps what now makes it most significant. No eminent literary figure can grow into existence without a remarkable environment, and the pages of the *Dial* gradually reveal the rather vigorous environment of Emerson's most active years. This vigor, however, appears more plainly in the earlier numbers, which, merely as literature, are often unexpectedly good. As you turn the pages of the later numbers you feel that the thought tends to grow more vague; the kinds

of reform grow more various and wilder; and, above all, the tendency, so fatal to periodical literature, of running to inordinate length, becomes more and more evident. From beginning to end, however, the *Dial* is fresh in feeling, wide in scope, earnest in its search for truth, and less

BROOK FARM.

eccentric than you would have thought possible. For all its ultimate failure, it leaves a final impression not only of hopefulness, but of sanity.

Its Spirit.

Though the *Dial* had little positive cohesion, its writers and all the Transcendentalists, of whom we may take them as representative, were almost at one as ardent opponents of lifeless traditions. Generally idealists, they were stirred to emotional fervor by their detestation of any stiffening orthodoxy, even though that orthodoxy were so far from dogmatic as Unitarianism. And naturally passing from things of the mind and the soul to things of that palpable part of human nature, the body, they found themselves generally eager to alter the affairs of this world for the

The Reforms advocated by the Dial.

better. If any one word could certainly arouse their sympathetic enthusiasm, it was the word "reform." Two distinct reforms the *Dial* fervently advocated. The more specific, which reached its highest development later, was the abolition of slavery, a measure important enough in the intellectual history of New England to deserve separate discussion.* The more general, which developed, flourished, and failed decidedly before the antislavery movement became a political force, was that effort to reform the structure of society which found expression in the community of Brook Farm.

Brook Farm.

In 1841, a number of people,—all in sympathy with the Transcendentalists, and most of them writers for the *Dial*, —bought a farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, ten or twelve miles from Boston. Here they proposed to found a community, where everybody should work to support the establishment and where there should be plenty of leisure for scholarly and edifying pleasure. Incidentally there was to be a school, where children were to help in the work of the community. The experiment began. At least during its earlier years, Brook Farm attracted considerable notice, and the sympathetic attention of many people afterward more eminent than its actual members. Hawthorne came thither for a while, and his *Blithedale Romance* is an idealized picture of the establishment. Emerson, though never an actual member, was there off and on, always with shrewd, kindly interest. Thither, too, occasionally came Margaret Fuller, whom some have supposed to be the original of Hawthorne's Zenobia.

Brook Farm, of course, was only a Yankee expression

* See Chapter viii.

of the world-old impulse to get rid of evil by establishing life on principles different from those of economic law. From earliest times, theoretical writers have proposed various forms of communistic existence as a solution of the problems presented by the sin and suffering of human beings in any dense population. The principles definitely adopted by the Brook Farm community in 1844 were those of Fourier, a French philosopher, who sketched out a rather elaborate ideal society. The basis of his system was that people should separate themselves into small phalanxes, each mutually helpful and self-supporting. This conception so commended itself to the Brook Farmers that, at an expense decidedly beyond their means, they actually built a phalanstery, or communal residence, as nearly as might be on the lines which Fourier suggested.

Brook Farm inevitably went to pieces. Its members were not skilled enough in agriculture to make farming pay; and, although after the *Dial* stopped they managed to publish several numbers of a similar magazine called *The Harbinger*, they found manual labor too exhausting to permit much activity of mind. They also discerned with more and more certainty that when you get together even so small a company of human beings as are comprised in one of Fourier's phalanxes, you cannot avoid uncomfortable incompatibility of temper. In 1847 their new phalanstery, which had cost ten thousand dollars and had almost exhausted their funds, was burned down; it was not insured, and before long the whole community had to break up.

Disintegration.

The *Dial* had come to its end three years before. Transcendentalism proved unable long to express itself in

any coherent form. Yet many of those who were connected with Brook Farm never relapsed into commonplace. GEORGE RIPLEY (1802–1880), the chief spirit of the community, became the literary critic of the *New York Tribune*, with which he retained his connection to the end of a long and honorable life. CHARLES ANDERSON DANA (1819–1897), also for a while connected with the *Tribune*, finally became editor of the *New York Sun*. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824–1892), who became associated with the periodicals published by the Harpers, maintained more of the purely ideal quality of his early days. JOHN SULLIVAN DWIGHT (1813–1839) returned to Boston, where, as editor of the *Journal of Music*, he did rather more than any one else to make the city a vital centre of musical art. And so in various ways Brook Farm faded into the memory of an earnest, sincere, beautiful effort to make human life better by practising the principles of ideal truth.

This New England Transcendentalism developed most vigorously in those years when the intellectual life of New York was embodied in the Knickerbocker school of writers. By contrasting those two neighboring phases of thought we can see how unalterably New England kept the trace of its Puritan origin, eagerly aspiring to knowledge of absolute truth. The literature of the Knicker-

bocker school was never more than a literature of pleasure. Even the lesser literature of Transcendentalism, not to speak of its permanent phases, constantly and earnestly aspired to be a literature of both knowledge and power, seeking in the eternities for new ranges of truth which should broaden, sweeten, strengthen, and purify mankind. Summary.

In brief, the Transcendentalism of New England was not, like that of Germany, a system of pure philosophy. Nor was it, like that of England, primarily a phase of literature. New England Transcendentalism was above all a revolution in conduct, a crusade for the spontaneous expression in every possible form of that individual human nature which Calvinism had thought deserving of confinement and rebuke.

VI

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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As time passes, it grows more and more clear that by far the most eminent figure among the Transcendentalists, if not indeed in all the literary history of America, was RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803–1882). People not yet past middle age still remember his figure, which so beautifully embodied the gracious dignity, the unpretentious scope, and the unassuming distinction of those who led the New England Renaissance. Born at Boston and descended from a long line of ministers, he was as truly a New England Brahmin as was Cotton Mather, a century and a half

Life.

before. His father was minister of the First Church of Boston, already Unitarian, but still maintaining unbroken the organization which had been founded by John Cotton at the settlement of the town. The elder Emerson died early. His sons were brought up in poverty; but they belonged on both sides to that hereditary clerical class whose distinction was still independent of so material an accident as fortune. In 1821 Waldo Emerson graduated from Harvard College, where, as his "Notes on Life and Letters in New England" record, the teaching of Edward Everett was filling the air with renascent enthusiasm. After graduation Emerson supported himself for a few years by school-teaching, studying meanwhile his hereditary profession of divinity. In 1829 he was made colleague to the Reverend Henry Ware, Jr., pastor of the Second Church in Boston. This was the church which had remained for above sixty years in charge of the Mathers. His ministerial career thus began in lineal succession to Cotton Mather's own. Mr. Ware, infirm in health, soon resigned; and before Emerson was thirty years old, he had become the regular minister of the Second Church.

Giving up his pastorate in 1832 because he was "not interested" in the Lord's Supper and so thought he ought not to administer the communion, he supported himself as a lecturer, occasionally preaching. He went abroad for a year, and there began that friendship with Carlyle which resulted in their lifelong correspondence. In 1836 appeared his first book, *Nature*, a bewildering but stimulating expression of the idealism which was the basis of his philosophy. In 1837 he gave, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College, his celebrated address

Early Writings.

on "The American Scholar," of which the closing sentences are among the most articulate assertions of his individualism:—

"If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience,—patience; with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not the chief disgrace in the world not to be an unit;—not to be reckoned one character;—not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north or the south? Not so, brothers and friends,—please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of letters shall no longer be a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men."

The next year, his address before the Divinity School at Cambridge carried his gospel of individualism to a point which frightened Harvard theology itself. In such a spirit he went on lecturing and writing all his life.

Emerson's work is so individual that one can probably get no true impression of it without reading deeply for one's self. As one thus grows familiar with him, his most characteristic trait begins to seem one which in a certain sense is not individual at all, but rather is common to all phases of lasting literature. Classical immortality, of course, is demonstrable only by the lapse of cumulating

ages. One thing, however, seems sure: in all acknowledged classics, there proves to reside a vitality which as the centuries pass shows itself less and less conditioned by the human circumstances of the writers. No literary expression was ever quite free from historical environment. Homer —one poet or many—belongs to the heroic age of Greece; Virgil, or Horace, to Augustan Rome; Dante to the Italy of Guelphs and Ghibellines; Shakspere to Elizabethan England. But take at random any page from any of these, and you will find something so broadly, pervasively, lastingly human, that generation after generation will read it with no sense of the changing epochs which have passed since the man who spoke this word and the men for whom it was spoken have rested in immortal slumber. In the work of Emerson, whatever its final value, there is something of this note. Every other writer at whom we have glanced, and almost every other at whom we shall glance hereafter, demands for understanding that we revive our sympathy with the fading or faded conditions which surrounded his conscious life. At best these other works, vitally contemporaneous in their own days, grow more and more old-fashioned. Emerson's work, on the other hand, bids fair to disregard the passing of time; its spirit seems little more conditioned by the circumstances of nineteenth-century Concord or Boston than Homer's was by the old Ægean breezes.

Permanent Quality in Emerson's works.

In form, however, Emerson's work seems almost as certainly local. Broadly speaking, it falls into two classes, —essays and poems.* The essays are generally com-

* Emerson's writings, as they have been gathered into the twelve volumes of the Riverside edition, comprise: *Nature*, etc., 1836; *Essays*, 1841, 1844; *Representative Men*, 1850; *English Traits*, 1856; *The Con-*

Their Form Local.

posed of materials which he collected for purposes of lecturing. His astonishing lack of method is familiar; he would constantly make note of any idea which occurred to him; and when he wished to give a lecture, he would huddle together as many of his notes as should fill the assigned time. But though this bewildering lack of system for a moment disguised the true character of his essays, the fact that these essays were so often delivered as lectures should remind us of what they really are. The Yankee lecturers, of whom Emerson was the most eminent, were only half-secularized preachers,—men who stood up and talked to eagerly attentive audiences, who were disposed at once to respect the authority of their teachers, to be on the look-out for error, and to go home with a sense of edification. Emerson's essays, in short, prove to be a development from the endless sermons with which for generations his ancestors had been accustomed to "entertain the People of God." In much the same way, Emerson's poems, for all their oddity of form, prove on consideration to possess many qualities for which an orthodox mind would have sought expression in hymns. They are designed not so much to set forth human emotion or to give æsthetic delight as to stimulate moral or spiritual

duct of Life, 1860; *Society and Solitude*, 1870; *Letters and Social Aims*, 1876; *Poems*, 1876; *Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (1883–84); *Miscellanies* (1883–84); *The Natural History of Intellect and Other Papers*, 1893. The volumes after which the dates are in parentheses contain articles not previously published.

ardor. All Emerson's individualism could not prevent his being a good old inbred Yankee preacher. A Yankee preacher of unfettered idealism, one may call him; better still, its seer, its prophet.

Emerson's Idealism.

Idealism, of course, is ancestrally familiar to any race of Puritan origin. That life is a fleeting manifestation of unfathomable realities which lie beyond it, that all we see and all we do and all we know are merely symbols of things unseen, unactable, unknowable, had been preached to New England from the beginning. But Emerson's idealism soared far above that of the Puritan fathers. Their effort was constantly to reduce unseen eternities to a system as rigid as that of the physical universe. To Emerson, on the other hand, all systems grouped themselves with the little facts of every-day existence as merely symbols of unspeakable, unfathomable, transcendental truth. There is forever something beyond; you may call it Nature, you may call it Over-Soul; each name becomes a fresh limitation, a mere symbolic bit of this human language of ours. The essential thing is not what you call the everlasting eternities; it is that you shall never cease, simply and reverently, with constantly living interest, to recognize and to adore them.

Would you strive to reconcile one with another the glories of this eternity? strive, with your petty human powers, to prove them consistent things?—

"Why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself: what then? . . . A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do.

He may as well concern himself with the shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you have said to-day. . . . Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."

Self-Reliance.

In Emerson's calm impatience of philosophic system there is a fresh touch of his unhesitating self-reliance. "See," he seems to bid you, "and report what you see as truly as language will let you. Then concern yourself no more as to what men shall say of your seeing or of your saying." For even though what you perceive be a gleam of absolute truth, the moment you strive to focus its radiance in the little terms of human language, you must limit the diffusive energy which makes it radiant. So even though your gleams be in themselves consistent one with another, your poor little vehicle of words, conventional and faint symbols with which mankind has learned to blunder, must perforce dim each gleam by a limitation itself irreconcilable with truth. Language at best was made to phrase what later philosophy has called the knowable, and what interested Emerson surged infinitely throughout the unknowable realms.

Take that famous passage from his essay in *Society and Solitude*, on "Civilization":—

" 'It was a great instruction,' said a saint in Cromwell's war, 'that the best courages are but beams of the Almighty.' Hitch your wagon to a star. Let us not fag in paltry works which serve our pot and bag alone. Let us not lie and steal. No god will help. We shall find all their teams going the other way,—Charles's Wain, Great Bear, Orion, Leo, Hercules ; every god will leave us. Work

rather for those interests which the divinities honor and promote—justice, love, freedom, knowledge, utility."

Though imperfect in melody, this seems an almost lyric utterance of something which all men may know and which no man may define. "Hitch your wagon to a star" has flashed into the idiom of our speech; but if you try to translate it into visual terms you must find it a mad metaphor. The wagon is no real rattling vehicle of the Yankee country, squalid in its dingy blue; nor is the star any such as ever twinkled through the clear New England nights. No chain ever forged could reach far on the way from a Concord barn to Orion. Yet behind the homely, incomplete symbol there is a thought, an emotion, flashing swifter than ever ray of starry light, and so binding together the smallest things and the greatest that for an instant we may feel them both alike in magnitude, each alike mere symbols of illimitable truth beyond, and both together significant only because for an instant we have snatched them together, almost at random, from immeasurable eternity.

"Hitch your wagon to a star."

For phenomena, after all, are only symbols of the eternities, and words at their best are trivial, fleeting, conventional symbols of these mere phenomena:—

"Good as is discourse, silence is better, and shames it. The length of the discourse indicates the distance of thought betwixt the speaker and the hearer. If they were at a perfect understanding in any part, no words would be necessary thereon. If at one in all parts, no words would be suffered."

So Emerson disdained words; and hardly cared how he set forth the shifting aspects of truth, as they passed before his untiring earthly vision.

A dangerous feat, this. Any one may attempt it, but

most of us would surely fail, uttering mere jargon wherein others could discern little beyond our several limitations. As we contemplate Emerson, our own several infirmities accordingly reveal to us more and more clearly how true a seer he was. With more piercing vision than is granted to common men, he really perceived in the eternities those living facts and lasting thoughts which, with all the cool serenity of his intellectual assurance, he rarely troubled himself intelligibly to phrase.

Emerson a Seer.

Sometimes these perceptions fairly fell within the range of language; and of language at such moments Emerson had wonderful mastery. Open his essays at random. On one page you shall find phrases like this:—

"By the same fire, vital, consecrating, celestial, which burns until it shall dissolve all things into the waves and surges of an ocean of light, we see and know each other."

On another, which deals with Friendship, comes this fragment of an imaginary letter:—

"I am not very wise; my moods are quite attainable, and I respect thy genius; it is to me as yet unfathomed; yet dare I not presume in thee a perfect intelligence of me, and so thou art to me a delicious torment."

And there are hundreds of such felicitous passages. Often, however, Emerson was face to face with perceptions for which language was never framed; and then comes such half-inspired jargon as that little verse which preludes the essay on "History:"

"I am the owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars, and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain."

So long as what he said seemed for the moment true, he cared for little else.

Emerson's Moderation and Good Sense.

Again, one grows to feel more and more in Emerson a trait surprising in any man so saturated with ideal philosophy. As the story of Brook Farm indicated, the Transcendental movement generally expressed itself in ways which, whatever their purity, beauty, or sincerity, had not the virtue of common sense. In the slang of our day, the Transcendentalists were cranks. With Emerson the case was different; in the daily conduct of his private life, as well as in the articulate utterances which pervade even his most eccentric writings, you will always find him, despite the vagaries of his ideal philosophy, a shrewd, sensible Yankee, full of a quiet, repressed, but ever present sense of humor which prevented him from overestimating himself, and compelled him even when dealing with spiritual phenomena to be relatively practical.

He did not phrase his discoveries in the sacred mysteries of dogma. He was rather a canny, honest Yankee gentleman, who mingled with his countrymen, and taught them as well as he could; who felt a kindly humor when other people agreed with him, and troubled himself little when they disagreed; who hitched his wagon to star after star, but never really confused the stars with the wagon.

Effect upon him of the New Knowledge of Philosophy and Letters.

And so descending to Concord earth, we find in him a trait very characteristic of the period when he happened to live, and one at which he himself would have been the first good-humoredly to smile. He was born just when the Renaissance of New England was at hand, when at last theology, classics, and law were seen not to be the only basis of the human intellect, when all philosophy and

letters were finally opening to New England knowledge. With all his contemporaries he revelled in this new world of human record and expression. To the very end he never lost a consequent, exuberantly boyish trick of dragging in allusions to all sorts of personages and matters familiar to him only by name. Take a sentence at random from his essay on "Self-Reliance:" "Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton." These great names he mentions with all the easy assurance of intimacy; he could hardly speak more familiarly of seven Concord farmers idling in a row on some sunny bench. Turn to him anywhere, and in any dozen pages you will find allusions as complacent as these, and about as accidental, to the bewilderingly various names at which his encyclopedia chanced to open. He had, in short, all the juvenile pedantry of renascent New England at a moment when Yankees had begun to know the whole range of literature by name, and when they did not yet distinguish between such knowledge and the unpretentious mastery of scholarship.

Summary. It is now over twenty years since Emerson's life gently faded away, and it is a full sixty since his eager preaching or prophecy of individualistic idealism stirred renascent New England to its depths. We have been trying to guess what Emerson may mean in permanent literature. To understand what he means historically, we must remind ourselves again of the conditions which surrounded his maturity. When he came to the pulpit of the Second Church of Boston, the tyranny of custom, at least in theoretical matters, was little crushed. Heretical though Unitarianism was, it remained in outward form a

dominant religion. Statesmanship and scholarship, too, were equally fixed and rigid; and so, to a degree hardly conceivable to-day, was the structure of society. Even to-day untrammelled freedom of thought, unrestrained assertion of individual belief, sometimes demands grave self-sacrifice. In Emerson's day it demanded heroic spirit.

To say that Emerson's lifelong heroism won us what moral and intellectual freedom we now possess would be to confuse the man with the movement in which he is the greatest figure. As the years pass, however, we begin to understand that no other American writings record that movement half so vitally as his. We may not care for some of the things he said; we may not find sympathetic the temper in which he uttered them; but we cannot deny that when, for two hundred years, intellectual tyranny had kept the native American mind cramped within the limits of tradition, Emerson fearlessly stood forth as the chief representative of that movement which asserted the right of every individual to think, to feel, to speak, to act for himself, confident that so far as each acts in sincerity good shall ensue.

His Courage.

To many he still remains preëminently "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." And indeed, whoever believes in individualism must always respect in Emerson a living prophet. Just as surely, those who believe in obedience to authority must always lament the defection from their ranks of a spirit which, whatever its errors, even they must admit to have been brave, honest, serene, and essentially pure with all that purity which is the deepest grace of ancestral New England.

VII

THE LESSER MEN OF CONCORD

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CONCORD, Massachusetts, until Emerson's time celebrated as the place where the embattled farmers made their stand against the British regulars in 1775, is now even better known as the Yankee village where for half a century Emerson lived, and gathered about him a little group of the intellectually and spiritually enlightened. Of the

men who flourished in Emerson's Concord, the most eminent was Hawthorne, whose work belongs not to philosophy, but to pure letters, and whom we shall consider later. He would hardly have expected a place among the prophets of the eternities. At least two other Concord men, though, would have been disposed to call themselves philosophers, and, with artless lack of humor, to expect immortality in company with Emerson and Plato and the rest. These were Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862).

A Bronson Alcott

Alcott.

Alcott was four years older than Emerson. The son of a Connecticut farmer, he began life as a peddler, in which character he sometimes strayed a good way southward. A thoroughly honest man of unusually active mind, his chief emotional trait appears to have been a self-esteem which he never found reason to abate. In the midst of peddling, he felt himself divinely commissioned to reform mankind. He soon decided that his reform ought to begin with education. As early as 1823, having succeeded in educating himself in a manner which he found satisfactory, he opened a school at his native town, Wolcott, Connecticut. Five years later he removed to Boston, where he announced that if people would send him their children, he would educate them as children had never been educated before. That he kept this promise no one will doubt after reading the two volumes of *Conversations with Children on the Gospels* (1836–1837), which show Al-

cott's strange method of teaching the poor little Boston children by asking them questions about the soul and the eternities, and by punishing the good children when the bad children misbehaved.*

Before many years his school came to an end. Mr. Alcott then became a professional philosopher, lecturing, writing, and failing to support his family in decent comfort. When the *Dial* was started, he contributed to it his "Orphic Sayings." The fountain of these was inexhaustible; and even Margaret Fuller had practical sense enough to inform him with regret that she could not afford to fill the *Dial* with matter, however valuable, from a single contributor. His reply was characteristic; he loftily regretted that the *Dial* was no longer an organ of free speech. In 1842 he visited England, where certain people of a radical turn received him with a seriousness which he found gratifying. Returning to America, he endeavored to establish at Harvard, Massachusetts, a community called Fruitlands, something like the contemporary Brook Farm. Before long Fruitlands naturally collapsed. For most of his ensuing life, he lived in Concord.

Fruitlands.

There is an aspect, no doubt, in which such a life seems the acme of perverse selfishness; but this is far from the whole story. The man's weakness, as well as his strength, lay in a self-esteem so inordinate that it crowded out of his possibilities any approach either to good sense or to the saving grace of humor. On the other hand, he was honest, he was sincere, he was devoted to idealism, and he attached to his perceptions, opinions, and utterances an importance which those who found him sympathetic were occasionally

* See also Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's *Record of a School: Exemplifying the General Principles of Spiritual Culture* (1835).

inclined to share. Of his published writings none was remembered, unless by his immediate friends, a year after he died. In life the man was a friend of Emerson's, holding in the town of Concord a position which he probably believed as eminent as Emerson's own. Now he seems the extreme type of what Yankee idealism could come to when unchecked by humor or common-sense.

If Alcott is rapidly being forgotten, the case is different with Thoreau. For whatever the quality of Thoreau's philosophy, the man was in his own way a literary artist of unusual merit. He was born of a Connecticut family not long emigrated from France. On his mother's side he had Yankee blood. What little record remains of his kin would seem to show that, like many New England folks of the farming class, they had a kind of doggedly self-assertive temper which inclined them to habits of personal isolation. Thoreau graduated at Harvard College in 1837. While a student he gained some little distinction as a writer of English; his compositions, though commonplace in substance, are sensitive in form. After graduation, he lived mostly at Concord. Though not of pure Yankee descent, he had true Yankee versatility; he was a tolerable farmer, a good surveyor, and a skilful maker of lead-pencils. In one way or another he was thus able by the work of comparatively few weeks in the year to provide the simple necessities of his vegetarian life. So he early

Thoreau.

determined to work no more than was needful for self-support, and to spend the rest of his time in high thinking.

In the general course which his thinking and conduct took, one feels a trace of his French origin. Human beings, the French philosophy of the eighteenth century had strenuously held, are born good; evil could spring only from the distorting influences of society. Accepted by the earlier Transcendentalists, this line of thought had led to such experimental communities as Brook Farm and the still more fleeting Fruitlands. Thoreau was Frenchman enough to reason out individualism to its logical extreme. The reform of society must be accomplished, if at all, by the reform of the individuals who compose it. Communities, after all, are only miniature societies, wherein must lurk all the germs of social evil. Let individuals look to themselves, then; under no other circumstances can human nature freely develop its inherent excellence. So for twenty-five years Thoreau, living at Concord, steadily tried to keep himself free from complications with other people. Incidentally, he had the good sense not to marry; and as nobody was dependent on him for support, his method of life could do no harm.

Contrast between Emerson and Thoreau.

Thoreau meant to be a philosopher, illustrating his philosophy from what he saw about Walden Pond, or on Cape Cod, or in the Maine woods, just as Emerson drew his illustrations from Plato, the Bible, Saadi, or Plutarch. Now with Emerson, although the illustrations were often not original and usually were chosen haphazard, the principle, as we have seen, was apt to be of permanent value for its lesson of faith and courage. Later generations,

therefore, have remembered Emerson's lessons of self-reliance and the like, and have forgotten any criticisms which, by way of illustration, he may have passed upon Napoleon, or Buddah, or Shakspere. With Thoreau the case is exactly the opposite. People have come to think that Thoreau's philosophy was often crabbed, far-fetched, and unoriginal. But they have also found that he illustrated his philosophy with eyes which for seeing ponds, and leaves, and birds, were the very best of his time. So they have very sensibly forgotten Thoreau as a philosopher, and have kept him in mind as a loving observer of Nature. To take a case in point: Thoreau's best known experiment was his residence for about two years in the woods near Concord, where he built himself a little cabin, supported himself by cultivating land enough to provide for his immediate wants, and devoted his leisure to philosophic thought. The fruit of this experiment was his best known book, *Walden* (1854). To Thoreau himself *Walden* was chiefly important because it tried to prove something. "I went to the woods," he says, "because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Nowadays, however, we care much less for what *Walden* tries to prove than for what its author heard and saw near Walden Pond.

Walden.

Nature, as every one knows, had been a favorite theme of that romantic revival in England whose leader was Wordsworth. In one aspect, Thoreau's writing might accordingly seem little more than an American evidence of a temper which had declared itself in the old world a generation before. Nothing, however, can alter the fact that

the Nature he delighted in was characteristically American. First of all men, Thoreau brought that revolutionary temper which recoils from the artificialities of civilization face to face with the rugged fields, the pine woods and the apple orchards, the lonely ponds and the crystalline skies of eastern New England. His travels occasionally ranged so far as the Merrimac River, Cape Cod, or even beyond Maine into Canada; but pleasant as the books are in which he recorded these wanderings,* we could spare them far better than *Walden*, or than the journals† in which for years he set down his daily observations in the single town of Concord. Thoreau's individuality is often so assertive as to repel a sympathy which it happens not instantly to attract; but that sympathy must be unwholesomely sluggish which would willingly resist the appeal of his communion with Nature. If your lot be ever cast in some remote region of our simple country, he can do you, when you will, a rare service, stimulating your eye to see, and your ear to hear, in all the little commonplaces about you, those endlessly changing details which make life everywhere so wondrous.

Thoreau's Style.

Nor is Thoreau's vitality in literature a matter only of his observation. Open his works almost anywhere—there are eleven volumes of them now—and even in the philosophic passages you will find loving precision of touch. He was no immortal maker of phrases. Amid bewildering obscurities, Emerson now and again flashed out utterances which may last as long as our language. Thoreau had

* *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, 1849; *The Maine Woods*, 1864; *Cape Cod*, 1865; *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*, 1866.

† *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, etc., ed. H. G. O. Blake, 1881; *Summer*, 1884; *Winter*, 1888; *Autumn*, 1892

no such power; but he did possess in higher degree than Emerson himself the power of making sentences and paragraphs artistically beautiful. Read him aloud, and you will find in his work a trait like that which we remarked in the cadences of Brockden Brown and of Poe; the emphasis of your voice is bound to fall where meaning demands. An effect like this is attainable only through delicate sensitiveness to rhythm. So when you come to Thoreau's pictures of Nature, you have an almost inexhaustible series of verbal sketches in which every touch has the grace of precision. On a large scale, to be sure, his composition falls to pieces; he never troubled himself about a systematically made book, or even a systematic chapter. In mere choice of words, too, he is generally so simple as to seem almost commonplace. But his sentences and paragraphs are often models of art so fine as to seem artless.

With Thoreau's philosophy, as we have seen, the case is different. Among Emerson's chief traits was the fact that when he scrutinized the eternities in search of ideal truth, his whole energy was devoted to the act of scrutiny. Perhaps, like Emerson, Thoreau had the true gift of vision; but surely he could never report his visions in terms which suffer us to forget himself. The glass which he offers to our eyes is always tinctured with his own disturbing individuality. In spite of the fact that Thoreau was a more conscientious artist than Emerson, this constant obtrusion of his personality places him in a lower rank, just as surely as his loving sense of nature places him far above the half-foolish egotism of Bronson Alcott. More and more the emergence of Emerson from his surroundings grows distinct. Like truly great men, whether he

Summary.

was truly great or not, he possessed the gift of such common-sense as saves men from the perversities of eccentricity.

We have now followed the Renaissance of New England from its beginning in the fresh vitality of public utterances and scholarship, through the awakening optimism of the Unitarians, to the disintegrant vagaries of the Transcendentalists. We have seen how, as this impulse proceeded, it tended to assume forms which might reasonably alarm people of sagely conservative habit. Reform in some respects is essentially destructive; and the enthusiasm of Yankee reformers early showed symptoms of concentration in a shape which ultimately became destructive to a whole system of society. This, which enlisted at least the sympathies of almost every Transcendentalist—which was warmly advocated by Channing himself, which stirred Emerson to fervid utterances concerning actual facts, and which inspired some of the latest and most ardent writings of Thoreau—was the philanthropic movement for the abolition of negro slavery in our Southern States.

VIII

THE ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT

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ENTHUSIASM for reform was obviously involved in the conception of human nature which underlay the world-wide revolutionary movement whose New England manifestation took the forms of Unitarianism and Transcendentalism. If human nature is essentially good, if evil is merely the consequence of what modern evolutionists might call artificial environment, it follows that relaxation of environment, releasing men from temporary bondage, must change things for the better. The heyday of Transcendentalism consequently had a humorous superficial aspect, admirably described in Lowell's essay on

Enthusiasm for Reform Inherent in Unitarianism and Transcendentalism.

Thoreau (1865). "A sudden mental and moral mutiny," he calls it, in which "every possible form of intellectual and physical dyspepsia brought forth its gospel." So long as reform remains in this stage, it can hardly impress people of common-sense as worse than ridiculous. When reform becomes militant, however, trouble heaves in sight; and the militant shape which New England reform took in the '40s clearly involved not only a social revolution, but an unprecedented attack on that general right of property which the Common Law had always defended.

Early Opposition to Slavery.

Negro slavery, at one time common to all the English-speaking colonies, had died out in the Northern States. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, meanwhile, the condition of industry in the South had tended to stimulate the institution in that region until it assumed unforeseen social and economic importance. Throughout colonial history there had been considerable theoretical objection to slavery.* Samuel Sewall opposed it; so from the beginning did the Quakers; and even in the South itself there were plenty of people who saw its evils and hoped for its disappearance. But no thoroughly organized movement against it took place until the air of New England freshened with the spirit of Renaissance.

Channing, who passed the years from 1798 to 1800 in Richmond, wrote from there:

"Master and slave! Nature never made such a distinction, or established such a relation. Man, when forced to substitute the will of another for his own, ceases to be a moral agent; his title to the name of man is extinguished, he becomes a mere machine in the hands of

* Consult the references under "Slavery" in Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature*, Vol. XI.

his oppressor. The influence of slavery on the whites is almost as fatal as on the blacks themselves."

To Channing the conclusion here stated was unavoidable. If human beings are essentially good, they have a natural right to free development. No form of environment could more impede such development than lifelong slavery. So slavery confronted honest believers in human excellence with a dilemma. Either this thing was a monstrous denial of fundamental truth, or else the negroes were not human. Something like the latter view was certainly held by many good people. In the South, indeed, it became almost axiomatic. To most philanthropic Northern people in 1830, on the other hand, the distinction between Caucasians and Africans seemed literally a question of complexion. Men they believed to be incarnate souls; and the color which a soul happened to assume they held a mere accident.*

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Garrison.

Accordingly, a full nine years before the foundation of the *Dial*, there was unflinchingly established in Boston a newspaper, which until the close of the Civil War remained the official organ of the New England antislavery men. This was the *Liberator*, founded in 1831 by WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON (1805–1879). Born of the poorer classes at Newburyport, by trade a printer, by tempera-

* This is compactly shown in the phrasing of the title of Lydia Maria Child's *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans* (1833).

ment an uncompromising reformer, he was stirred from youth by a deep conviction that slavery must be uprooted. When he founded the *Liberator*, he had already made himself conspicuous; but the educated classes thought him insignificant. In 1833 he was a principal founder of the Antislavery Society in Philadelphia. From that time, the movement strengthened. Garrison died in 1879. For the last fifteen years of his life he was held, as he is held by tradition, a great national hero, a man who stood for positive right, who won his cause, who deserves unquestioning admiration, and whose opponents merit equally unquestioning contempt.

So complete a victory has rarely been the lot of any earthly reformer, and there are aspects in which Garrison deserves all the admiration accorded to his memory. Fanatical, of course, he was absolutely sincere in his fanaticism, absolutely devoted and absolutely brave. What is more, he is to be distinguished from most Americans who in his earlier days had attained eminence and influence by the fact that he never had such educational training as should enable him to see more than one side of a question. The greatest strength of an honest, uneducated reformer lies in his unquestioning singleness of view. He really believes those who oppose him to be as wicked as he believes himself to be good. What moral strength is inherent in blind conviction is surely and honorably his.

The Conservative Opinion.

But because Garrison was honest, brave, and strenuous, and because long before his life closed, the movement to which he unreservedly gave his energy proved triumphant, it does not follow that the men who opposed him were wicked. To understand the temper of the conservative people of New England we must stop for a moment, and

see how slavery presented itself to them during the years of the antislavery struggle.

In the first place, the institution of slavery was honestly regarded by many people as one phase of the more comprehensive institution which really lies at the basis of modern civilization—namely, property. The conviction that slavery, whatever its evils, was really a form of property, and that an attack on slavery therefore involved a general attack on civilization, was one of the strongest convictions of conservative New England.

Again, in many minds which abhorred the evils of slavery, this conviction was strengthened by an equally honest one that when you have made a bargain you should stick to it. The Constitution of the United States was presenting itself more and more in the light of an agreement between two incompatible sets of economic institutions, assuring to each the right freely to exist within its own limits. Among the conservative classes of New England the antislavery movement accordingly seemed as threatening to the Union as to property itself. Whatever threatened Union or property, they conceived, clearly threatened civilization.

A third consideration, also, had great weight among thoughtful people: antislavery agitation, they believed, would greatly increase the danger of savage insurrection, the mere fear of which kept Southern people, especially Southern women, in constant terror.*

Sincerity of the Conservative Belief.

When at last the antislavery movement began to gather disturbing force, this conservative opposition to it was therefore as violent, as sincere, as deep, and in many aspects as admirable, as was the movement itself. But the

* See Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 376–377.

fact that the conservative temper of New England was not, as some antislavery men asserted, wicked, in no way involves what conservative New England passionately proclaimed—namely, wickedness on the part of the antislavery men themselves. The truth is that an irrepressible social conflict was at hand, and that both sides were as honorable as were both sides during the American Revolution, or during the civil wars of England. The earlier phases of the antislavery movement produced no pure literature; but they did excite the most characteristic utterances of at least three orators who are still remembered.

Parker.

The one of these who most clearly marks the relation of the antislavery movement to Unitarianism and Transcendentalism was the Reverend Theodore Parker (1810–1860). Born of country folk at Lexington, Massachusetts, he studied at Harvard in 1830–1, and in 1837 he became a Unitarian minister. In the history of Unitarianism he has a prominent place; in the history of Transcendentalism, too, for his writings are among the most vigorous and specific in the *Dial*, to which he was a constant contributor; but his most solid strength lay in his scholarship. There have been few men in New England whose learning has equalled his in range and in vitality. The manner in which his ardent nature impelled him to express himself, however, was so far from what is generally characteristic of scholars that in popular memory his scholarship has almost been forgotten. As a Unitarian minister, Parker is remembered mostly for having carried individual preaching to its most unflinching conclusions. As a Transcendentalist, Parker's enthusiastic and active temperament made him far more reformer than

philosopher. He was content to let others pry into the secrets of the eternities. What chiefly interested him were the lines of conduct which men ought to follow in view of the new floods of light; and among these lines of conduct none seemed to him so important as that which should lead straightest to the abolition of slavery. He never lived to see his passionate purpose accomplished. Intense activity broke down his health; he died and was buried at Florence, whither he had gone for recuperation.

Among his virtues and graces was not that of sympathy with opponents; and when it came to public utterances on the subject of abolition he indulged himself in a freedom of personal attack which, after the lapse of half a century, seems extreme. For this might be pleaded the excuse that Theodore Parker, like Garrison, sprang from that uneducated class which is apt to see only one side of any stirring question. No such excuse may be pleaded for the personal acrimony of those two other antislavery orators who are best remembered—WENDELL PHILLIPS (1811–1884) and CHARLES SUMNER (1811–1874).

Phillips. Phillips bore a distinguished name. Kinsmen of his had founded the academies of Exeter and Andover, and his father had been the first Mayor of the city of Boston at a time when political power there still resided in the hands of a few leading families. He graduated at Harvard College in 1831, and in 1834 he was admitted to the bar. A man of extremely active and combative temperament, he sincerely wished to practise his profession; but for the next two or three years he found few clients. Just at this time a meeting was held in Faneuil Hall, where among other speakers the Attorney-General of Massachusetts defended the action of a western mob in

taking the life of Lovejoy, a very outspoken Abolitionist. Phillips was in the audience; he interrupted the speaker, made his way to the platform, and then and there delivered an antislavery outburst which carried the audience by storm. So, having publicly declared war against conservatism by passionately inciting a public meeting to disregard the authority of that class to which he himself hereditarily belonged, he embarked on a lifelong career of agitation.

Throughout, his oratory was highly finished. A man of distinguished personal appearance, with all the grace and formal restraint of hereditary breeding, he had mastered, to a rare degree, the subtle art of first winning the sympathy of audiences, and then leading them, for the moment unresisting, to points where, on waking from his spell, they were astonished to find themselves. Many people, particularly of the less educated sort, ended by yielding themselves to his power. Others, of a more thoughtful habit, often felt that in fact this power was only the consummate adroitness of a man so impatient of rivalry as recklessly to indulge his inordinate passion for momentary dominance. His speeches were true speeches. In print, lacking the magic of his delivery, they are like the words of songs which for lyric excellence need the melodies to which they have once been wedded. As the years pass, admiration for his great effectiveness of speech is often qualified by suspicion that, with the light which was his, he should have refrained from such reckless denunciation of established order.

Like Phillips, the other Bostonian orator whose name is associated with the antislavery movement sacrificed his social comfort to his principles. Charles Sumner was born of a good family at Boston; he graduated at Harvard; he

Sumner.

became a lawyer; and before the age of thirty he had spent three years in Europe, where he made permanent friendships with many notable people. A man of cultivated taste, he appears at his best in the records of his lifelong intimacy with the poet Longfellow. Like Phillips's, his career began as one which might have been expected to carry on the old traditions of the cultivated classes of New England; but he early found himself stirred by his fervent belief in the moral wrong of slavery. Sumner's devotion to principle is unquestioned. The violence with which he permitted himself to abuse those who did not share his opinions, on the other hand, disfigures many of his speeches. Of these speeches, collected in fifteen good-sized volumes, perhaps the most famous is "The Crime against Kansas," delivered in the United States Senate Chamber on the 19th and 20th of May, 1856.

Mrs. Stowe.

These antislavery men did some of their chief work when the cause they advocated seemed far from public favor. We come now to a book produced by the antislavery movement, which suddenly proved that movement popular. This was Mrs. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S (1812–1896) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, the year after Sumner had entered the Senate from Massachusetts, and two years after Webster's Seventh of March Speech.

Harriet Beecher, in literature the most distinguished of her family, was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, where her

father, LYMAN BEECHER (1775–1863), was settled as a Congregational minister. In 1832 her father removed from Boston to Cincinnati, where for twenty years he was the president of a theological seminary. Here, in 1836, Harriet Beecher married the Reverend Calvin Stowe, who, like herself, had ardent antislavery sympathies. In ordinary domestic duties Mrs. Stowe had more to do than most women; but her activity was such that throughout her busiest days her mind was constantly though not systematically occupied with the reform which she did so much to further. Living for years just on the borderland of the slave States and the free, she acquired a personal familiarity with slavery shared by few Northern people; and at odd times she was constantly practising her pen. In 1850, the year of Webster's Seventh of March Speech, her husband was appointed a professor at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. Here, in 1851 and 1852, Mrs. Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the object of which was to set forth in concrete form the actual horrors of slavery. At first little noticed, this book rapidly attracted popular attention. During the next five years above half a million copies were sold in the United States alone; and it is hardly excessive to say that wherever *Uncle Tom's Cabin* went, public conscience was aroused.*

Uncle Tom's Cabin

Written carelessly, and full of crudities, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, even after fifty years, remains a remarkable piece of fiction. The truth is, that almost unawares Mrs. Stowe had in her the stuff of which good novelists are made. Her plot, to be sure, is conventional and rambling; but her characters, even though little studied in detail, have a vitality which no study can achieve; we unhesi-

* See Rhodes, I, 278–285.

tatingly accept them as real. Her descriptive power, meanwhile, was such as to make equally real the backgrounds in which her action and her characters move. What is more, these backgrounds, most of which she knew from personal experience, are probably so faithful to actual nature that the local sentiment aroused as you read them may generally be accepted as true. And though Mrs. Stowe's book was written in spare moments, amid the distractions of housekeeping and of a growing family, her careless style is often strong and vivid.

Should any one doubt Mrs. Stowe's power as a writer, remembering only that in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* she achieved a great popular success, partly caused by the changing public opinion of her day, we need only glance at some of her later work to make sure that she had in her a power which, if circumstances had permitted its development, might have given her a distinguished place in English fiction. Her best book is probably *Oldtown Folks* (1869). Like all her work, this rambling story of life near Boston about the beginning of the nineteenth century is careless in detail and very uneven. As you consider it, however, you grow to feel that above almost any other book *Oldtown Folks* sets forth the circumstances and the temper of the native Yankee people. What is more, the careful passages—the opening chapters, for example—are admirably written. In brief, Mrs. Stowe differed from most American novelists in possessing a spark of genius. Had this genius pervaded her work, she might have been a figure of lasting literary importance.

Oldtown Folks.

Even as it was, she had power enough to make *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the most potent literary force of the anti-slavery days. She differed from most Abolitionists in

having observed on the spot all the tragic evils of slavery. Until the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, slavery had on the whole presented itself to the North as a deplorable abstraction. Wherever the book went, it awakened this abstraction into life, much as powerful preaching sometimes awakens a dormant sentiment of religion. Of course, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is partisan, but it is honestly so; there can be no doubt that Mrs. Stowe believed her negroes as true to life as later, and rightly, she believed the Yankees of *Oldtown Folks*. Whatever you may think of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, you can never truly feel it to have been instigated by a demagogic purpose. Mrs. Stowe's purpose was honestly to state appalling truth.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was published in 1852. To its unprecedented popularity may perhaps be traced the final turn of the public tide. Within ten years the conflict between the slave States and the free reached the inevitable point of civil war. The 1st of January, 1863, saw that final proclamation of emancipation which, by confiscating, as virtually contraband property, all slaves in the States which were then in arms against the Federal government, practically achieved the end for which the antislavery men had unfalteringly striven.

Lincoln.

We can hardly speak of the Emancipation Proclamation without touching for a moment upon the greatest name in American history of the nineteenth century. Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) proved himself in the Lincoln-Douglas campaign such a master of debate, and in his inaugural addresses and in the famous Gettysburg speech such a master of simple and powerfully eloquent English, that, aside from his great political services, any account

of American oratory or of antislavery would be incomplete without some mention of him. But Lincoln's historical importance is so great that any discussion of him would lead us far afield. And our concern now is with New England.

IX

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

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Among the antislavery leaders of Massachusetts was one who, with the passing of time, seems more and more distinguished as a man of letters. John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892), born at Haverhill, Massachusetts, came of sound country stock, remarkable only because for several generations the family had been Quakers. The first New England manifestations of Quakerism, in the seventeenth century, had taken an extravagantly fanatical form, which resulted in tragedies still familiar to tradition. As the Friends of New England had settled down into peaceful observance of their own principles, however, letting alone the affairs of others, they had become an inconspicuous, inoffensive body, neglected by the surrounding orthodoxy. Theologically, they believed in God, Jesus

Christ, and the Bible. The interpreter of the divine word they found not in any established church nor in any officially sanctified order of ministers, but in the still, small voice given to mankind by the Heavenly Father.

The Quaker Faith.

In this faith there is clearly involved a conclusion at odds with Calvinism. To Quakers, inasmuch as every man possesses within himself the power of seeing the inner light and of hearing the still, small voice of God, all men are necessarily equal. So, when the antislavery movement began, Whittier, a lifelong adherent of this traditional faith, found himself in a relation to militant philanthropy very different from that of ancestral Calvinists. These, lately emancipated by the new life of Unitarianism and Transcendentalism, came to the reform with all the hotness of head which marks converts. Whittier, on the other hand, had inherited the principles to which the men with whom he allied himself had been converted; and so, although a lifelong and earnest reformer, he is remarkably free from virulence. Again, sprung from a class which made his childhood literally that of a barefoot boy, and growing up in days when the New England country was still in the possession of an unmixed race whose capacity for self-government has never been surpassed, Whittier could unhesitatingly base not only on religious theory, but also on personal inexperience, his fervent faith in the equality of mankind.

Life.

Whittier's youth was passed in the country. His education never went beyond country schools and two terms at the Haverhill Academy; but he had a natural love for literature. When he was nineteen years old, a poem of his was printed in the Newburyport *Free Press*, then edited by Garrison. At twenty-one he was already a professional

writer for country newspapers. At twenty-three he was editor of the *Haverhill Gazette*. A year later he was made editor of a paper in Hartford, Connecticut; but his health, never robust, troubled him, and he returned to Massachusetts. In 1831 he published his first volume, a little book of verses called *New England Legends*, and during the same year, that in which Garrison established the *Liberator* at Boston, he became actively and ardently interested in the movement against slavery. Until 1840 this kept him constantly busy; in that year he resigned his charge of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, a journal devoted to the cause of abolition in Philadelphia. He removed to Amesbury, Massachusetts, where he lived thenceforth. From 1826 until the end, no year went by without his publishing poems. His temperament was shy, and his later life uneventful.

Though Whittier was precocious, and his literary career extended over more than sixty-five years, he was not prolific. He never wrote much at a time, and he never wrote anything long. In the seven volumes of his collected works there are very few pieces which might not have been produced at a single sitting. Again, his work throughout these sixty-five years was far from varied in character. The limited circumstances of his life combined with lack of humor to make his writings seem often commonplace. What gives them merit are occasional passages where

simplicity emerges from commonplace into dignity and sometimes into passion. For half a century, Bryant remained correct and delicately sentimental; for longer still Whittier remained simple, sincere, and fervent.

Snow-Bound.

His masterpiece, if the word be not excessive, is "Snow-Bound," written when he was about fifty-seven years old. At that time, when most of his immediate family were dead, he tenderly recalled his memories of childhood. The vivid simplicity of his descriptions every one must feel; his picture of a winter evening at his old home, for example, almost appeals to the eye—

> "Shut in from all the world without,
> We sat the clean-winged hearth about,
> Content to let the north-wind roar
> In baffled rage at pane and door,
> While the red logs before us beat
> The frost line back with tropic heat;
> And ever, when a louder blast
> Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
> The merrier up its roaring draught
> The great throat of the chimney laughed;
> The house-dog on his paws outspread
> Lay to the fire his drowsy head,
> The cat's dark silhouette on the wall
> A couchant tiger's seemed to fall;
> And, for the winter fireside meet,
> Between the andiron's straddling feet,
> The mug of cider simmered slow,
> The apples sputtered in a row,
> And, close at hand, the basket stood
> With nuts from brown October's wood."

Nor is the merit of "Snow-Bound" merely descriptive. Throughout it you will find phrases which, except for mere lyric music, have a simple felicity almost final. Take the

couplet, for example, in which he speaks of his aunt, no longer young, who never married—

> "All unprofaned she held apart
> The virgin fancies of the heart."

Or take the lines in which he remembers a sister, dead early in life—

> "And while in life's late afternoon,
> Where cool and long the shadows grow,
> I walk to meet *the night that soon*
> *Shall shape and shadow overflow*,
> I cannot feel that thou art far."

Throughout "Snow-Bound" you may discover lines as excellent as these.

New England Nature.

Such vividness as distinguishes the descriptive passages of "Snow-Bound" appears throughout Whittier's descriptive verse. Here, for example, are some lines from the "Prelude" which take one to the very heart of our drowsy New England summers:

> "Along the roadside, like the flowers of gold
> The tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
> Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,
> And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers
> Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
> The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,
> Wing-weary with its long flight from the South,
> Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf
> With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
> Confesses it. The locust by the wall
> Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.
> A single hay-cart down the dusty road
> Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
> On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,

> Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
> The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still
> Defied the dog-star. Through the open door
> A drowsy smell of flowers—gray heliotrope,
> And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette—
> Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends
> To the pervading symphony of peace."

At first sight perhaps commonplace, passages like this as they grow familiar prove more and more admirable in their simple truth. Of course they lack lyric beauty. Whittier's metrical range was very narrow, and his rhymes were often abominable. But whenever he dealt with the country he knew so well, he had an instinctive perception of those obvious facts which are really most characteristic, and within which are surely included its unobtrusive beauty and its slowly winning charm. With this excellent simplicity of perception he combined excellent simplicity of heart and phrase.

Narrative Poems.

In general, of course, the most popular literature is narrative. So Whittier's Yankee ballads often seem his most obvious works,—"Skipper Ireson's Ride," for example, or that artlessly sentimental "Maud Muller," where a New England judge is made to play the part of knight-errant of romance. Like his admirable poetry of Nature, these are simple and sincere. In sentiment, too, the first is fervid. Both in conception and in phrase, however, these, with all the rest we may let them stand for, are so commonplace that one finds critical admiration out of the question.

Whittier's true claim to remembrance will rest on no such popularity as this, even though that popularity chance to be more than momentary. In the first place, his simple

pictures of New England Nature are often excellent. In the second place, the fervor of his lifelong faith in the cause of human freedom sometimes breathed undying fire into verses which he made concerning the conflict with slavery.

Another trait which he possessed is rare in temperaments eager for reform. This is magnanimity. It appears nowhere more clearly than in almost the only departure from chronological order in the final collection of his works, which he himself arranged. Until 1850, Webster, whose devotion to the ideal of Union had compelled him to oppose every aggression of the South, had been held by the antislavery men an heroic leader. His Seventh of March Speech, which supported the Fugitive Slave Law, brought down on him a storm of antislavery indignation never expressed more fervently than in a poem by Whittier, still generally included in popular collections of American lyrics. He called this poem "Ichabod;" and here are some of its verses— Ichabod.

"So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

* * * * * *

"Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now,
Nor brand with deeper shame the dim,
Dishonored brow.

"But let its humbled sons instead,
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

* * * * * *

"Then pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backwards, with averted gaze,
And hide the shame!"

In 1850 no man condemned Webster more fiercely or more sincerely than Whittier. But two years after "Ichabod" saw the light, Webster was dead; and it was nine before the Civil War broke out; and Whittier survived for almost thirty years longer. In 1880, reflecting on the past, he wrote about Webster again. This poem he called "The Lost Occasion," and in his collected works he put it directly after the "Ichabod" which he had so fervently written thirty years before. "The Lost Occasion" has generally been neglected by the makers of American anthologies, so "Ichabod" is traditionally supposed to express Whittier's final feeling about Daniel Webster. In this case tradition is unjust to both men. The single deviation from chronology in Whittier's collected works shows that the poet desired his final sentiment concerning our greatest Whig statesman to be phrased in no lines denunciatory, but rather in such words as these—

The Lost Occasion.

"Thou shouldst have lived to feel below
Thy feet Disunion's fierce upthron;
The late-sprung mine that underlaid
Thy sad concessions vainly made."

* * * * * *

"No stronger voice than thine had then
Called out the utmost might of men,
To make the Union's charter free
And strengthen law by liberty.

* * * * * *

"Wise men and strong we did not lack;
But still, with memory turning back,

In the dark hours we thought of thee,
And thy lone grave beside the sea.

* * * * * *

"But, where thy native mountains bare
Their foreheads to diviner air,
Fit emblem of enduring fame,
One lofty summit keeps thy name.

* * * * * *

Sunrise and sunset lay thereon
With hands of light their benison,
The stars of midnight pause to set
Their jewels in its coronet.
And evermore that mountain mass
Seems climbing from the shadowy pass
To light, as if to manifest
Thy nobler self, thy life at best!"

Summary.

Throughout the records of antislavery you may find passionate indignation and self-devoted sincerity; but you shall search those records far and wide before you shall find a mate for this magnanimous utterance. As time passes, Whittier seems more and more the man among the antislavery leaders of New England whose spirit came nearest to greatness.

So, as the years pass, he tends to emerge from the group of mere reformers, and to range himself too with the true men of letters. To them—to the literature of renascent New England, as distinguished from its politics, its scholarship, its religion, its philosophy, or its reform—we are now to turn. And we have come to this literature almost insensibly, in considering the work of one who, beginning life as a passionate reformer, may remain for posterity a living poet.

X

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

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THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY: *The Atlantic Index*, 1857–1888, Boston, 1889, gives a good idea of the contents of the magazine. One may also consult Scudder's *Lowell*, Morse's *Holmes*, and other biographies of the chief contributors to the *Atlantic*.

FIELDS: There is no collected edition of Fields's works; for the separate titles of his books, several of which are still in print (Boston: Houghton), see Foley, 91–92. Mrs. Fields wrote a volume of *Biographical Notes and Personal Sketches* of her husband, which was published at Boston (by Houghton) in 1881. There are selections from Fields in Griswold's *Poetry*, 573–575; Stedman, 181–182; Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 309–311.

IN the autumn of 1857 there appeared in Boston the first number of the periodical, still in existence, which more than anything else represents the literature of the New England Renaissance. In the early years of the century, the characteristic publication of literary Boston was the *North American Review*. In the '40s the *Dial*, limited as was its circulation, was equally characteristic of contemporary literary energy. From 1857 until the renascent literature of New England came to an end, its vehicle was the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Purpose of the Atlantic.

This youngest and last of the native periodicals of Boston may be distinguished from its predecessors in various ways. Obviously, for one thing, while the primary function of the *North American Review* was scholarly, and that of the *Dial* philosophic, that of the *Atlantic* was literary.

In the second place, the *North American Review* was started by young men who at the moment had no vehicle for expression, and who felt that they had a good deal to say. The *Dial* was similarly started by a group of enthusiasts comparatively little known in letters. The *Atlantic*, on the other hand, did little more than afford a regular means of publication for men whose reputation was already established. The earlier periodicals began youthfully; the *Atlantic* was always mature.

We have spent what may have seemed excessive time on the environment of the mature literature which at last thus concentrated. Yet without a constant sense of the influences which were alive in New England, this literature can hardly be understood. It was all based on the traditions of a rigid old society, Puritan in origin and immemorially fixed in structure. To this, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, came that impulse of new life which expressed itself in such varied ways,—in the classically rounded periods of our most finished oratory; in the scholarship which ripened into our lasting works of history; and in the hopeful dreams of the Unitarians, passing insensibly into the nebulous philosophy of the Transcendentalists, and finally into first fantastic and soon militant reform. Each of these phases of our Renaissance gave us names which are still memorable: Webster, Everett, and Choate; Ticknor, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman; Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Thoreau; Theodore Parker, Phillips, and Sumner; Mrs. Stowe, and Whittier. Thus grouped together, we can see these people to have been so dissimilar, and sometimes so antagonistic, that human friendship between them, or even mutual understanding, was hardly possible. At the same time, as we look at

Renascent Writers.

them together, we must see that all possessed in common a trait which marks them as of the old New England race. All were strenuously earnest; and though the earnestness of some confined itself to matters of this world,—to history, to politics, or to reform,—while that of others was centred, like that of the Puritan fathers, more on the unseen eternities, not one of them was ever free from a constant ideal of principle, of duty. Nor was the idealism of these men always confined to matters of conduct. In Emerson, more certainly than in the fathers themselves, one feels the ceaseless effort of New England to grasp, to understand, to formulate the realities which the evolutionists call unknowable. The New Englanders of our Renaissance were no longer Puritans; they had discarded the dogmas of Calvinism; but so far as Puritanism was a lifelong effort to recognize and to follow ideals which can never be apprehended by unaided human senses, they were still Puritan at heart.

Spirit of New England and of the Middle States.

Herein lies the trait which most clearly distinguishes New England from those neighboring Middle States where the letters of America sprang into life a few years earlier. In both, the impulse to expression which appeared so early in the nineteenth century may be held only an American phase of the world-wide tendency to revolution which during the century effected so many changes in Europe. To both, too, this impulse came in a guise which may make the term "Renaissance" seem applicable equally to both. In New York, however, the impulse tended immediately to the production of an imitative literature which had done its best work by 1832; in New England, meanwhile, that same year was marked by Emerson's sermon on the Lord's Supper. Oratory was at its best;

scholarship was swiftly developing; Unitarianism had completely dominated Boston; Transcendentalism was just beginning; and not only destructive reform but pure letters too were still to come.

With the Renaissance there came at last to New England an eager knowledge of all the phases of human thought and expression which enrich the records of modern civilization. The temper in which this new learning was received there is nowhere better typified than by the title and the contents of Emerson's *Representative Men* (1850). The personages whom he chose to group under this everyday title were Plato, the Philosopher; Swedenborg, the Mystic; Montaigne, the Sceptic; Shakspere, the Poet; Napoleon, the Man of the World; and Goethe, the Writer. To Emerson, in short, and to the New England of which in his peculiar phrase he was a representative man, the whole range of literature was suddenly opened. Two centuries of national inexperience had deprived the region not only of critical power, but for the moment of all suspicion that this was lacking. With the fresh enthusiasm of discovery New England faced this newly found company of the good and great, feeling chiefly that even like ourselves these were men.

Enthusiasm for newly discovered Literatures.

Fifty years and more have done their work since those aspiring old times. Nowadays the fact that a book—ancient or modern—is an acknowledged classic is apt to make people assume that it cannot be interesting. In the full flush of our Renaissance, on the other hand, there was left in us something like the artless unconsciousness of healthy children, who are ready to enjoy anything no matter whether other people admire it or not. Partly because of this eager delight in foreign literature, we were a

little slow to make literature for ourselves. It is not that we lacked it, of course. The names we have already considered belong not only to the history of those various phases of the Renaissance with which we have chosen to consider them, but to that of letters, too. Hardly one of these men, however, was primarily literary. All deserve distinction in literary history chiefly because they did with loving care the writing which they held their earthly business.

So the literature of New England matured slowly. It is more than an accident of date that the years when the *Knickerbocker* magazine began to fade out of New York, and with it the whole elder school of which it marked the blameless decline, saw in Boston the establishment of the first periodical whose function was chiefly literary. The innocent old literature of pleasure which began with the novels of Brockden Brown was truly exhausted. The literature of New England, meanwhile, which had been ripening as its elder was falling into decay, had only just reached the point where it demanded a regular vehicle of expression. This vehicle came, to be sure, only when the strength of the New England Renaissance was beginning to fail. None of the New England men of letters, however, had begun to feel the infirmities of age, when one and all found a common meeting-ground in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

The Atlantic the Vehicle of Renascent Letters.

The *Atlantic* is thus associated with almost every name

eminent in our later New England letters; but most closely of all, perhaps, with that of a man whose presence in Boston had incalculable influence on local literary life. This was JAMES THOMAS FIELDS (1817–1881), for many years publisher of the *Atlantic*, and from 1862 to 1870 its editor.

Fields. Fields was born at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and educated only in the common schools there. When a mere boy he began active life as a clerk in a Boston bookstore. At twenty-two he was already partner in a publishing house; and he remained an active publisher in Boston for thirty-five years, retiring with a comfortable fortune. Fields is memorable, however, not because of his practical gifts, nor yet because in a modest way he was himself a man of letters, but rather because of his deep and excellent influence on the literature of New England.

From boyhood Fields had loved literature; and this enthusiasm combined with great personal amiability and with sympathetic kindness of nature to make him, before he reached middle life, the intimate personal friend of every man of letters in New England, and of many such men in the old world too. The result of this is evident to any one who will glance at the trade-lists of the firm of which he was for years the head. Here, to go no further, you will find the works of Emerson, Thoreau, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Hawthorne. There are plenty of other honorable American names there, too, as well as those of eminent foreign writers. For one thing, Fields was the first to collect and to set forth in systematic form the work of Thomas De Quincey, until Fields's time lost in numberless periodicals. As a sincere lover of letters and a publisher of unusual tact and skill, Fields,

during the years between 1840 and 1870, afforded the literary men of New England a rare opportunity. One and all had constantly near by a skilful publisher, who was at the same time a wise counsellor, a warm personal friend, and an ardent admirer. The stimulus to literary production afforded by such a patron of letters can hardly be estimated.

XI

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

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Life.

AMONG the men of letters who in mature life gathered about the *Atlantic Monthly* the most popular was HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807–1882). Born at Portland, Maine, where his father was a lawyer, he went at fifteen to Bowdoin College, at Brunswick, Maine, where he took his degree in 1825. At that time there were also at Bowdoin J. S. C. Abbott, the historian, Franklin Pierce, who became President of the United States, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. During these college years, too, the spirit of Renaissance was freshest in New England air. Channing's great sermon on Unitarianism had been preached

in 1819; Emerson's sermon on the Lord's Supper, which marks the beginning of transcendental disintegration, was not preached until 1832. Longfellow's youth, in brief, came just when the religious and philosophic buoyancy of the New England Renaissance was surging; and this affected him all the more because in a region and at a college where old-fashioned orthodoxy still prevailed, he was from the beginning a Unitarian.

When Longfellow graduated from Bowdoin at the age of nineteen, Ticknor's teaching at Harvard, then in its seventh year, had made such general impression that the authorities of Bowdoin began to desire something similar there. In 1826, accordingly, Longfellow went abroad under an agreement to prepare himself, by a three years' study of modern languages, for a Bowdoin professorship which should resemble Ticknor's at Harvard. In 1829 he came home with a reading knowledge of Spanish, Italian, French, and German, and began to teach at Bowdoin. Six years later, when Ticknor retired from teaching, he recommended Longfellow to the Corporation of Harvard; and Longfellow, who up to that time had had little personal relation with Cambridge, accepted the Smith professorship. To prepare himself for this wider field of work, he went abroad for a year more. In 1836 he began his teaching at Harvard, which continued for eighteen years.

Smith Professorship.

As these years went on, Longfellow, like Ticknor, felt

more and more how gravely the drudgery of teaching must interfere with work which time may well prove more lasting and significant. His constant, enthusiastic wish was to be a poet. In 1854 he consequently resigned the professorship. The next year it was given to James Russell Lowell, who held it, at least in title, until his death in 1891.

Up to 1854, Longfellow, although already popular as a poet, remained a college professor of a new and radical subject. Though he always loved this subject, he hated the use which his professional circumstances compelled him to make of it. The instinct which made him recoil from the drudgery of teaching was sound: his true mission was not to struggle with unwilling hearers; it was rather to set forth in words which should find their way to the eager readers of a continent the spirit as distinguished from the letter of the literatures with which as a professor he conscientiously dealt so long.

Longfellow in Cambridge.

From 1854 to the end, Longfellow lived as a professional author in that fine old Cambridge house which before his time was conspicuous as the deserted mansion of some Tories exiled by the Revolution, and which is now consecrated as the home of the most widely popular and beloved American poet. Long before he died, his reputation as a man of letters was so firmly established that people had almost forgotten how he had once been a college teacher.

For this forgetfulness there is plenty of reason. Though throughout Longfellow's professorship he had felt its duties seriously to prevent literary labor, he had produced during his incumbency much of his most familiar verse. His *Voices of the Night* appeared in 1839, his *Evangeline* in 1847, and his *Golden Legend* in 1851. Even before

he laid his professorship down, there were hundreds who knew him as a poet for every one who knew that he was a teacher. In point of fact, too, the work which he did during the twenty-seven years of his purely literary life hardly extended, although it certainly maintained, the poetical

LONGFELLOW'S HOME, CRAIGIE HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE.

reputation which he had already established during his twenty-five years of teaching. To understand his real character as a poet, however, we must constantly keep in mind that other profession of teacher which he so faithfully practised for a full third of his life.

The subjects which Longfellow taught now have a familiar place in every good college. In his time they resembled some newly discovered continent, where whole realms of country are still unknown. To Longfellow, accordingly, the true business of his professorship seemed like that of an enthusiastic explorer. The languages which he learned

so eagerly never seemed to him deserving of lifelong study for themselves; they were merely vehicles of expression which carried him into new and wonderful worlds of beautiful old humanity. These vehicles were to be loved so far as in beautiful form they conveyed to us thoughts intrinsically beautiful and noble, but they were at best vehicles, whose use was to lead us into inexhaustible regions of humanity, unknown except by vague tradition to our American ancestors.

Academic Temper.

In his love for literature thus considered, Longfellow never wavered. What vexed him throughout the years of his teaching was not the matter with which he dealt; it was rather that he shrank from imparting literature to unwilling pupils, that he longed to saturate himself with it and to express unfettered the sentiments which it unfailingly stirred within him. These sentiments, which he uttered in a manner so welcome to all America, seemed to him as spontaneous as ever inspiration seemed to poets who have heard the true whisper of the Muse. Yet one who now studies his work can hardly help feeling that even though he never suspected the fact, his temper as a man of letters was almost as academic as was the profession to which he reluctantly devoted year after year of his maturity.

Even as a teacher Longfellow remained a man of letters; he felt constantly stirred to what he believed original expression, and he was never content unless he was phrasing as well as he could the emotions which arose within him amid all the drudgery of work. But if in this aspect Longfellow was a genuine man of letters, he was all the while an academic scholar; for the influence which stirred him most was not what he experienced, but rather what he read. From beginning to end he was inspired

Much of his Poetry suggested by his Reading.

chiefly, if not wholly, by noble and beautiful records of facts long since dead and gone. Whoever will take the trouble to look through an index of the titles of Longfellow's poems will at once be struck by the number of subjects suggested by foreign travel or by reading in foreign literature. Among these are most of the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1849–1873), the greater part of *Christus* (1849–1872), which Longfellow considered one of his most important poems; the translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (1867) and many shorter translations from French, German, Spanish, Italian, Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and other sources; the romances *Outre-Mer* (1835), *Hyperion* (1839), and *Kavanagh* (1849); and many short poems of various degrees of originality.

Though this limitation marks Longfellow apart from those great poets who have immortally expressed the meaning of actual life, it had at once the grace of sincerity, and the added grace of that natural gift which was perhaps Longfellow's most salient. His taste was unerring. Wherever he met the beauties of literature he delighted in them instinctively; and in his instinctive feelings about literature there was something very like the confidence in human nature which inspired the world in which he lived. To him literature was a region of delight so fresh that he could rejoice in its beauties, which he perceived with such instant tact, and could honestly be blind to everything not beautiful or noble.

Popularity.

The impression which he made on his first readers has never been better phrased than by Mr. Stedman—

"A new generation may be at a loss to conceive the effect of Longfellow's work when it first began to appear. I may convey something of this by what is at once a memory and an illustration. Take the

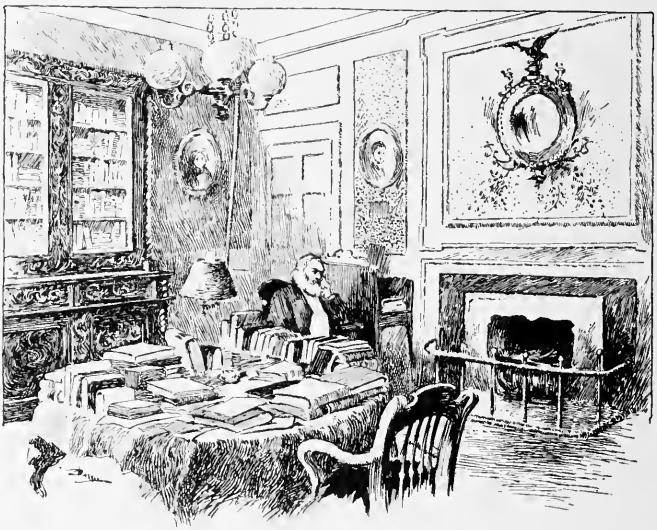
case of a child whose Sunday outlook was restricted, in a decaying Puritan village, to a wooden meeting-house of the old Congregational type. The interior—plain, colorless, rigid with dull white pews and dismal galleries—increased the spiritual starvation of a young nature unconsciously longing for color and variety. Many a child like this one, on a first holiday visit to the town, seeing the vine-grown walls, the roofs and arches, of a graceful Gothic church, has felt a sense of something rich and strange; and many, now no longer children, can remember that the impression upon entrance was such as the stateliest cathedral now could not renew. The columns and tinted walls, the ceiling of oak and blue, the windows of gules and azure and gold—the service, moreover, with its chant and organ-roll—all this enraptured and possessed them. To the one relief hitherto afforded them, that of nature's picturesqueness—which even Calvinism endured without compunction—was added a new joy, a glimpse of the beauty and sanctity of human art. A similar delight awaited the first readers of Longfellow's prose and verse. Here was a painter and a romancer indeed, who had journeyed far and returned with gifts for all at home, and who promised often and again to

> 'sing a more wonderful song
> Or tell a more marvellous tale.'"

The hold which Longfellow thus took on enthusiastic American youth he soon took on the whole reading public of our country. His popularity is evident in our general familiarity with the creatures of his fancy. The village blacksmith, the youth who bears 'mid snow and ice a banner with the strange device *Excelsior*, the skipper wrecked on the reef of Norman's Woe, Evangeline, Hiawatha, Miles Standish, John Alden, Priscilla the Puritan maiden, and even Paul Revere—figures and names which we owe almost wholly to Longfellow—he has made us apt to group with Bible patriarchs or the world-old heroes of antiquity. Such popularity almost implies a weakness. Profundity of substance, or excellence of form, rarely

Limitations.

touches the masses; and Longfellow's very popularity resulted long ago in a reaction against him among the fastidious. Even in early days, too, when his popularity was in its first flush, the admiration which his work excited was clouded by occasional dissent. Margaret Fuller, for



LONGFELLOW IN HIS LIBRARY.

example, conscientiously devoted to the extravagance of Transcendental philosophy, found Longfellow shallow, and said so. Poe utterly misunderstood the academic character of Longfellow's mind, and accused him of plagiarism. And there was more such criticism.

Again, Longfellow, a lifelong friend of Charles Sumner, always sympathized with the antislavery movement; and in 1842 he published some poems in its behalf. These poems are perfectly sincere; but one needs only to com-

pare them with the similar work of Whittier to feel more strongly than ever Longfellow's lack of passion.

Simplicity and Beauty Longfellow's chief Qualities.

But this is more than enough of his faults and limitations. He has passed from us too lately to permit us to dwell upon the singular serenity and beauty of his personal life and character. No one can read its records or remember anything of its facts without feeling the rare quality of a nature which throughout a lifetime could persist unspoiled by prosperity and unbroken by poignant personal sorrows. To be sure, he was never passionate; neither in his life nor in his verse does he ever seem to have been swept away by feeling. On the other hand, as we have seen, his taste was unerring, and his sentiment gently sympathetic. His real office was to explore and to make known that modern literature in whose beauty he delighted. And if the verse in which he set forth his delight be hardly of the kind which enriches world-literature, its lucidity of phrase and its delicacy of rhythm combine to give it a sentimental beauty which must long endear it to those who love simplicity of heart.

Summary.

Thereby, after all, Longfellow comes very near a world-old definition of literary greatness, which has sometimes been held the virtue of those who think the thoughts of the wise and who speak the language of the simple. It may be that he knew few wise thoughts which were all his own; but he so truly loved the wisdom and the beauty of those elder literatures which he was the first of Americans fully to recognize, that he absorbed in a way of his own the wisdom which the good and the great of the past had gleaned from experience. At first, to be sure, it may seem that those considerable parts of his work which deal with our native country are of another stripe. More and more,

however, one grows to feel that, despite the subjects, these are not indigenous in sentiment. Rather, for the first time, they illuminate our American past with a glow of conventional romance. So by and by we find that our gently academic poet has just been thinking about New England in such moods as he loved in countless old-world poets who early and late recorded the historic romance of Europe. Yet Longfellow does not seem to have been consciously imitative. He sincerely believed that he was making spontaneous American poetry. Whatever his lack of passion or imagination, he was never false to himself. Whether he ever understood his mission it is hard to say; but what that mission was is clear; and so is the truth that he was a faithful missionary. Never relaxing his effort to express in beautiful language meanings which he truly believed beautiful, he revealed to the untutored new world the romantic beauty of the old. And suffusing even our simple native traditions with a glow of romance,

"He left his native air the sweeter for his song."

XII

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

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Life.

In 1854 Longfellow resigned the Smith professorship at Harvard College. The next year James Russell Lowell (1819–1891) was appointed his successor. Up to this time Lowell's career, though more limited than Longfellow's, had been similar. He was born at Cambridge, the son of a Unitarian minister whose church was in Boston. In 1838 he took his degree at Harvard; he studied law; but he found this profession distasteful, and his true interest was in letters. For fifteen years before his appointment to the Smith professorship, he had been professionally a literary man. From this time on, for a full twenty-two years, his ostensible profession became what Longfellow's had been from 1836 to 1854, and

Ticknor's from 1817 to 1835,—the teaching of modern languages and literature to Harvard undergraduates.

The different tasks to which the successive Smith professors addressed themselves might once have seemed a question of different personalities; to-day they seem rather a question of developing American culture. Ticknor's business was to introduce to New England a fresh range of learning; and accordingly his most characteristic publi-
Teaching. cation was the comprehensive, accurate, unimaginative *History of Spanish Literature* (1849). When, after twenty years, Longfellow succeeded him, America knew modern literature by name, but, except perhaps for Bryant's translations, hardly more. Thus it became Longfellow's task to make pupils enjoy excursions into that limitless world of modern literature which for America was still newly discovered. In 1855, when Lowell came to his work, the conditions had altered again. The main facts of modern literature had become familiar; and the New England Renaissance had greatly stimulated general reading. To the generation with which Lowell came to his maturity, the great modern masters—Spenser and Shakspere, Dante and Cervantes and Goethe—were thus as freshly delightful as the old Greeks had been to the culture of fifteenth-century Italy. Modern literature had been discovered, it had been enthusiastically explored, and now came the task of understanding it. So as a college teacher, and as a critical writer too, Lowell's professional task was interpretative.

The eminence which finally made Lowell a national figure came not from his teaching, but from the social accomplishment with which from 1877 to 1885 he filled the office of United States minister, first to Spain and later to

Sense of detail and of Incongruous Impressions.

England. This fact that Lowell's eminence came late in life is characteristic. Throughout his career, as man of letters and as teacher alike, he had been at once helped and hindered by peculiarities of temperament conquerable only by the full experience of a slow maturity. Born and brought up in Cambridge, when Cambridge was still a village, he was familiar with the now vanished country folk of old New England. From youth he was passionately fond of general reading, in days when this led no Yankee away from sound literature. Though impatient of minute scholarship, too, he possessed one of the most important traits of a minute scholar: by nature he was aware of detail in every impression, and careful of it in every expression. What truly interested him, to be sure, in life and in books alike, were the traits which make books and life most broadly human. In his effort to understand humanity, however, he was incessantly hampered by his constitutional sense of detail. There were for him aspects in which both books and life seemed profoundly serious; there were other aspects in which even the most serious phases of both seemed whimsically absurd. And truly to understand the complex unity of humanity, he felt, you must somehow fuse all these,—life and books, sublimity and humor, light and twilight and shadow.

The fact that Lowell was constantly sensitive to incompatible impressions was not his only temperamental obstacle. The well-known circumstance that he was unable satisfactorily to revise his writing indicates how completely he was possessed by each of his various moods, which

ELMWOOD, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., BIRTHPLACE OF JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

often chased one another in bewildering confusion, yet again left him for prolonged intervals in what seemed to him states of hopeless stagnation. Throughout this uncertainty, however, one can feel in his literary temper two constant, antagonistic phases. His purity of taste, particularly as he grew older, approached Longfellow's. Yet all the while he was incessantly impelled to whimsical extravagance of thought, feeling, and utterance. The trait appears in his fondness for cramming his published essays with obscure allusions to unheard of oddities in the byways of literature and history. If one took these seriously, they

would be abominably pedantic. In fact, however, this mannerism was only a rather juvenile prank. Life puzzled Lowell, and in revenge Lowell amused himself by puzzling the people he talked to or wrote for. It is no wonder that this paradoxical conflict between purity of taste and mischievous extravagance of temper retarded his maturity.

Lowell's temperament, again, involved somewhat unusual sensitiveness to the influences which from time to time surrounded him. Early in life he married a woman remarkable alike for charms and for gifts, who was enthusiastically devoted to the reforms then in the air. It was partly because of her influence, apparently, that Lowell for a while proved so hot-headed a reformer. After her premature death this phase of his temper became less evident. It was revived, of course, by the passionate days of civil war, when he upheld extreme Northern sentiments with all his might; and the depth of his experience finally resulted in the "Commemoration Ode," which chiefly entitles him to consideration as a serious poet. Yet this ode itself, though quickly written and little revised, is marked rather by exceptionally sustained seriousness of feeling than by anything which seems simply, sensuously passionate. One of the traits for which you must search Lowell's volumes long is lyrical spontaneity. Lowell was a man of deep, but constantly various and whimsically incongruous, emotional nature, whose impulse to expression was constantly hampered by all manner of importunate external impressions.

Vision of Sir Launfal.

For all this, the chances are that, like Longfellow, Lowell would have been apt to consider himself most seriously as a poet; and certainly his poems most clearly express his individuality. His first volume of verse appeared in

1841, three years after his graduation, and in 1844 and 1848 he published other such volumes. In these there is nothing particularly characteristic. Honest, careful, sincere enough, the work seems; but except for the eminence finally attained by its author little of it would attract attention to-day. This early verse reached its acme in the *Vision of Sir Launfal*, published in 1848. The familiar stanza from the prelude to Part I, beginning, "And what is so rare as a day in June?" is typical of the whole. It is the work of a man who has read a great deal of poetry, and who is thus impelled to write. Somewhat in the mood of Wordsworth—to whom three stanzas before he has alluded—he tries to express the impression made upon him by Nature. He succeeds only in making Nature seem a pretty phase of literature. It is all very serious, no doubt, and sweet in purpose; but it is never spontaneously lyric.

Fable for Critics.

In 1848 also came two other publications, which show a very different Lowell; one is the *Fable for Critics*, the other the first collection of the *Biglow Papers*, which had begun to appear in the *Boston Courier* two years earlier. In a study like ours, the *Fable for Critics* is a useful document. Ten years out of college and already a professional writer, alertly alive to the contemporary condition of American letters, Lowell at last permitted himself to write with unrestricted freedom. The result is queer. The fable, so far as there is any, proves as commonplace as the *Vision of Sir Launfal;* and, besides, it is obscured by such whimsicality and pedantry as hampered Lowell all his life. At the same time, his portraits of contemporary American writers, in many cases made long before their best work was done, are marked not only by a serious

critical spirit, but by acute good sense and surprising felicity of idiomatic phrase. You can rarely find more suggestive criticism anywhere than what the *Fable for Critics* says of Emerson, Theodore Parker, Bryant, Whittier, Hawthorne, Cooper, Poe, Longfellow, Willis, Irving, Holmes, or Lowell himself. It is good criticism, too, sincerely stating the impression made on a singularly alert contemporary mind by writers who have now acquired what they did not then surely possess, a fair prospect of permanence; and the very fantastic oddity of its style, which makes prolonged sessions with it tiresome, has a touch not only of native Yankee temper but of incontestable individuality. At last permitting himself the full license of extravagant, paradoxical form, Lowell revealed all his amateurish faults; but he revealed too all those peculiar contradictory qualities which made the true Lowell a dozen men at once. Nobody else could have written quite this thing, and it was worth writing.

Biglow Papers.

More worth writing still, and equally characteristic, were the *Biglow Papers*, which were collected at about the same time. They were written during the troubles of the Mexican War. The slave States had plunged the country into that armed aggression, which excited as never before the full fervor of the antislavery feeling in the North. Just at this time the influence of Lowell's wife made his antislavery convictions strongest. No technical form could seem much less literary than that in which he chose to express his passionate sentiments. Using the dialect of his native Yankee country, and emphasizing its oddities of pronunciation by extravagant misspelling, he produced a series of verses which have an external aspect of ephemeral popularity. At first glance,

the laborious humor of Parson Wilbur's pedantry, and the formal, interminable phrases in which he imbeds it, seem radically different from the lines on which they comment. As you ponder on them, however, Wilbur's elaborately over-studied prose and the dialect verse of Hosea Biglow and Bird-o'-Freedom Sawin fall into the same category. Both prove so deliberate, both so much matters of detail, that in the end your impression may well be, that, taken all in all, each paper is tediously ingenious. No one number of the *Biglow Papers* is so long as the *Fable for Critics;* but none is much easier to read through.

Their Power.

In the *Biglow Papers*, at the same time, just as in the *Fable for Critics*, you feel constant flashes of Lowell's rarest power; in compactly idiomatic phrase he could sum up matters on which you may endlessly ponder with constantly fresh delight and suggestion. Take a familiar stanza from the first paper of all—

> "Ez fer war, I call it murder,—
> There you hev it plain an' flat;
> I don't want to go no furder
> Than my Testyment fer that;
> God hez sed so plump an' fairly,
> It's ez long ez it is broad,
> An' you've got to git up airly
> Ef you want to take in God."

To bring a phrase like those last two lines within the range of decency, requires a power for which genius is hardly an excessive name. Yet Lowell, spontaneously true to his paradoxical, whimsical self, has made what looks like comic verse, and is phrased in a caricature of Yankee dialect, a memorable statement of tremendous truth.

What Lowell did in this first of the *Biglow Papers* he did in all such verse which he ever wrote. In 1862, he produced "Mason and Slidell, a Yankee Idyll." This ends with some stanzas on Jonathan and John, of which the phrasing is as final as anything which Lowell's fantastic pen ever put on paper:

> "The South says, '*Poor folks down!*' John,
> An' 'All men up!' say we,—
> White, yaller, black, an' brown, John:
> Now which is your idee?
> Ole Uncle S. sez he, 'I guess,
> John preaches wal,' sez he:
> 'But, sermon thru, an' come to *du*,
> Why, there's the old J. B.
> A crowdin' you an' me!' "

Lowell was really at his best when he let himself be most fantastic, and this because of that whimsical instability of temper, which he rarely managed quite to control. Beneath his wildest vagaries you will often feel deep earnestness; but he lacked the power generally to sustain either mood quite long enough to express it with complete effect. The merit of his verses generally lies in admirable single phrases, single lines, or at most single stanzas. These flashing felicities never have quite the power which should fuse a whole poem into congruous unity. Like Lowell's per- ·ost characteristic verse seems a bewil- of disjointed fragments, each admirable ıcere humanity.

Prose Writings

y which so pervades Lowell's poetry equally prose writings. Open these wherever you the portions which deal with public affairs, ·re in those considerable portions which criti-

cise literature, and you will anywhere find this same fantastic, boyishly pedantic range of allusion. You will find, too, all sorts of unexpected turns of phrase, often rushing into actual puns; again you will find elaborate rhetorical structure, stimulated by those great draughts of old English prose which Lowell could quaff with gusto all his life. "Literary" you feel this man again and again; but by and by you begin to feel that, after all, this literature proceeds from an intensely human being with a peculiarly Yankee nature. Somewhere about him there is always lurking a deep seriousness strangely at odds with his obvious mannerisms and his fantastic oddities of literary behavior. The literature he loved presented itself to him as the lasting impression of what life had meant to men as human as himself. Let us read, as sympathetically as we can, he constantly seems to urge, the works of these great fellows who after all were only men like ourselves. You shall search far before you shall find a more familiar interpreter of literature than he. Yet few were ever more sensitive to the nobility of wisdom and of beauty.

Later Work.

During Lowell's professorship at Harvard he was for some years editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and later had a share in editing the *North American Review*. At this period most of his prose was published. His later writing, produced after his diplomatic career b[illegible] stly occasional; but all along it tended slowl[illegible] the end it gained at least in simplicity [illegible] this dignity was not assumed, but devel[illegible] slowly attained maturity and with that knov[illegible] pean life which came during his diplomatic gained something which at last gave his utt[illegible] with their old earnestness and humanity, a

respecting humility. Nothing shows him more at his best than the short speech on "Our Literature" which he made in response to a toast at a banquet given in New York to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Washington's inauguration. The simple hopefulness of the closing paragraph, where for once Lowell was not afraid to be commonplace, is a fit and admirable conclusion for the six volumes of his collected prose:

"The literature of a people should be the record of its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and its shortcomings, its wisdom and its folly, the confidant of its soul. We cannot say that our own as yet suffices us, but I believe that he who stands, a hundred years hence, where I am standing now, conscious that he speaks to the most powerful and prosperous community ever devised or developed by man, will speak of our literature with the assurance of one who beholds what we hope for and aspire after, become a reality and a possession forever."

So if one asks where Lowell finally belongs in the history of our New England Renaissance, the answer begins to phrase itself. A born Yankee and a natural lover of letters, he instinctively turned at once to books and to life for the knowledge which should teach him what humanity has meant and what it has striven for. For all the oddities of temper which kept him from popularity, the man was always true to his intensely human self. In his nature there were constant struggles between pure taste and perverse extravagance. As a man of letters, consequently, he was most himself when he permitted himself forms of expression in which these struggles needed no concealment. But through it all there persists just such wholesome purity of feeling and purpose as we love to think characteristic of New England. Throughout, despite

Summary.

whimsical extravagance of phrase, you may discern a nature at once manly and human.

Lowell the Humanist.

"Human," after all, is the word which most often recurs as one tries to phrase what Lowell means. In one sense the most truly human being is he who most strives to understand those records of the past to which we give the name of the humanities. In another sense the most deeply human being is he who strives most to understand the humanity about him. It was unceasing effort to fuse his understanding of the humanities with his understanding of humanity which made Lowell so often seem paradoxical. He was in constant doubt as to which of these influences signified the more; and this doubt so hampered his power of expression that the merit of his writing lies mostly in disjointed phrases. At their best, however, these phrases are full of humanity and of the humanities alike. In distinction from Ticknor, the scholar of our New England Renaissance, and from Longfellow, its academic poet, Lowell defines himself more and more clearly as its earnest humanist.

XIII

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

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Parentage.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894) was born at Cambridge, where his father, a Connecticut man and a graduate of Yale, had for some years been the Calvinistic minister of the First Church. Though Harvard College had already yielded to Unitarianism, this had not yet achieved the social conquest of the region. During Dr. Holmes's boyhood and youth, however, the struggle grew fierce; and at about the time of his graduation, his father, whose devotion to the old creed never wavered, was formally deposed from the pulpit which, after nearly forty years of occupancy, he stoutly refused to open to Unitarian doctrine. The old man, than whom none was ever more faithfully courageous, was supported by a majority of the communicants of the Cambridge church; a majority of the parish, however, preferred the other side. Accordingly, Abiel Holmes, with his saving remnant of church members, was forced to establish a new place of worship.

Now Dr. Holmes, in the matter of faithful courage, was his father's counterpart. So, in comparatively early life, finding himself unable to accept the Calvinistic teachings of his youth, he became what he remained all his life,—a stout Unitarian.

Dr. Holmes's maternal grandfather was a judge and a Fellow of Harvard College. Thus hereditarily allied with both pulpit and bar, Holmes was doubly what he used to call a New England Brahmin. Like any good orthodox boy, he was sent to school at Andover; and thence, like any good Cambridge boy, he was sent to Harvard. After taking his degree in 1829, he began the study of law; but finding this not congenial, he soon turned to medicine. In pursuance of this study he went abroad for two or three years, finally receiving the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1836. After a year or two of practice he became in 1839 Professor of Anatomy at Dartmouth College. A year later he returned to Boston, where he remained for the rest of his life; and from 1847 to 1882 he was Parkman Professor of Anatomy in the Harvard Medical School.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Life.

Extreme localism of professional character and social position is characteristic of Holmes throughout life. After 1840, when he finally settled in Boston, he rarely passed a consecutive month outside of Massachusetts. Among Boston careers perhaps the only other of eminence which was so uninterruptedly local is that of Cotton Mather.

The intolerant Calvinistic minister typifies seventeenth-century Boston; the Unitarian physician typifies the Boston of the century just past. To both alike, Beacon Hill instinctively presented itself, in the phrase which Holmes has made so familiar, as the Hub of the Solar System.

Nature of Holmes's Eminence.

Though throughout Holmes's fifty years of Boston residence he was a man of local eminence, his eminence was

HOLMES'S BIRTHPLACE, CAMBRIDGE.

not quite of a professional kind. His practice, in which he took no excessive interest, gradually faded away; and long before he gave up his lectures on anatomy, they were held old-fashioned. He neither neglected nor disliked his profession, but it did not absorb him; and as his life proceeded, he probably grew less and less patient of that overwhelming mass of newly discovered detail which modern physicians must constantly master. Another reason why his medical career became less and less important is that from the beginning he had a keen interest in literature and was widely known as a poet. Now, a man eminent

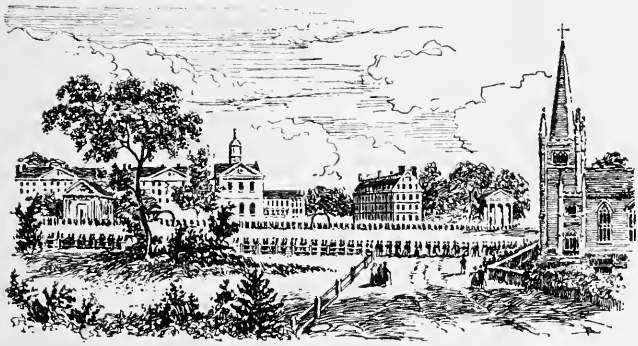
in a learned profession may certainly be eminent in letters too, but public opinion hates to have him so; and any youth who would succeed in law or medicine can hear no sounder advice than that which Dr. Holmes often gave in his later years,—namely, that you should never let people suppose you seriously interested in anything but your regular work.* In the very year when Holmes returned from Europe to begin practice, he published a volume of poems, and at least three subsequent collections appeared before; with the beginning of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he became known as a remarkable writer of prose. His writings, in fact, steadily distracted attention from his profession. Nor is this the whole story. Holmes's local eminence was perhaps chiefly due to his social gifts. Early in life he acquired the reputation of being the best talker ever heard in Boston; and this he maintained unbroken to the very end.

In his later life his conversation and his wit alike, always spontaneous and often of a quality which would have been excellent anywhere, are said sometimes to have been overwhelming. His talk tended to monologue, and his wit to phrases so final that nobody could think of anything to say in return. There was humorous and characteristic good-nature in that title, the *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, which he gave, so early as 1831, to a couple of articles written for the now forgotten *New England Magazine*. Fully twenty-five years elapsed before he published anything else of the kind. Then, when in 1857 he began those papers under the same title which have become permanent in our literature, his opening phrase is whimsically characteristic: "I was going to say, when I was

The Autocrat.

* Morse's *Life*, 158–161.

interrupted." Whereupon, after twenty-five years of interruption, he proceeds with the autocratic utterances now familiar all over the world. The contagious good-humor of this title, like the whimsicality of that little reference to the lapse of a quarter of a century, indicates the



COMMENCEMENT DAY AT HARVARD IN HOLMES'S TIME.
From Josiah Quincy's "History of Harvard University."

quality which made Holmes popular, despite his habit of keeping the floor and of saying admirably unanswerable things.

Up to middle life Dr. Holmes's literary reputati
that of a poet whose work was chiefly social.
his first publication, to be sure, "Old Ironsid
impromptu outburst of feeling," caused b
newspaper that the old frigate "Constit
destroyed. His fervent verses not c
purpose of saving from destructior
whose hulk still lies at the Charl
have retained popularity. Few
American school-boys than th

"Ay, tear her tatte

Most of Holmes's early verse, however, may be typified by the first stanza of "My Aunt":

"My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown;
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone;

"I know it hurts her—though she looks
As cheerful as she can;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span."

Social Verse.

Such verse as this, with its light good-humor and its reckless pun, is of a sort which for want of a native English term we call *vers de société*.

Of social verse in every sense of the word Holmes early showed himself a master; and to the end his mastery never relaxed. He wrote verses for almost every kind of occasion which demanded them. The occasions most
quent in their demands, however, were those which
in the yearly life of Harvard College. Holmes was
the most completely loyal Harvard man of his
Both at the formal ceremonies of the college
more intimate meetings of his college class
ly called on for poems which he never
whoever wishes to understand the tem-
not do better than saturate himself
h Holmes has made part of the
f these recall the older traditions
untly than the song he wrote for
ary of the college in 1836:

"And, when at length the College rose,
The sachem cocked his eye
At every tutor's meagre ribs
Whose coat-tails whistled by :
But when the Greek and Hebrew words
Came tumbling from his jaws,
The copper-colored children all
Ran screaming to the squaws.

"And who was on the Catalogue
When college was begun?
Two nephews of the President,
And *the* Professor's son ;
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun ;)
Lord! how the seniors knocked about
The freshman class of one !"

Combination of Fun and Tenderness.

More characteristic of his riper years was an inimitable combination of reckless fun and tender sentiment such as makes peculiarly his own the first verses of his poem for the "Meeting of the Alumni" in 1857:

"I thank you, MR. PRESIDENT, you've kindly broke the ice ;
Virtue should always be the first,—I'm only SECOND VICE—
(A vice is something with a screw that's made to hold its jaw
Till some old file has played away upon an ancient saw).

"Sweet brothers by the Mother's side, the babes of days go
All nurslings of her Juno breasts whose milk is never dr
We come again, like half-grown boys, and gather at '
About her knees, and on her lap, and clinging roun

"We find her at her stately door, and in her anc
Dressed in the robes of red and green she alw
Her eye has all its radiant youth, her chee
We drop our roses as we go, hers flour

His class poems, again, tell of

as nothing else can. Here is a random verse from one that he made in 1867:

"So when upon the fated scroll
The falling stars* have all descended,
And, blotted from the breathing roll,
Our little page of life is ended,
We ask but one memorial line
Traced on thy tablet, Gracious Mother:
'My children. Boys of '29.
In pace. How they loved each other!'"

Harvard Spirit.

And Holmes could speak for the new Harvard as well as for the old. In 1886, when the college celebrated its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, Lowell delivered an oration and Holmes a poem. He was then an old man, addressed to a task of solemn dignity, and his verse lacked the vivacity which almost to that time had seemed perennial; but passages of it show him as sympathetic with the future as his older college verses show him with the past. Take, for example, the stirring lines in which he sets forth the conflict of Harvard with the ghost of Calvinism:

"As once of old from Ida's lofty height
The flaming signal flashed across the night,
So Harvard's beacon sheds its unspent rays
Till every watch-tower shows its kindling blaze.
Caught from a spark and fanned by every gale,
brighter radiance gilds the roofs of Yale;
erst and Williams bid their flambeaus shine,
wdoin answers through her groves of pine;
nceton's sands the far reflections steal,
hty Edwards stamped his iron heel;

Catalogue of Harvard, the names of the dead
When the catalogues were still phrased in
described by the quaintly barbarous term

Nay, on the hill* where old beliefs were bound
Fast as if Styx had girt them nine times round,
Bursts such a light that trembling souls inquire
If the whole church of Calvin is on fire !
Well may they ask, for what so brightly burns
As a dry creed that nothing ever learns?
Thus link by link is knit the flaming chain
Lit by the torch of Harvard's hallowed plain."

Eighteenth-Century Manner.

In the form taken by this most serious of his occasional poems there is something characteristic. The verse groups itself in memory with that of another poem, which he read at a dinner given in honor of Lowell's seventieth birthday. Holmes was ten years older, and Mr. Sidney Bartlett, the acknowledged leader of the Boston bar, was ten years older still. So Holmes made some whimsical allusion to Lowell's youth and then to his own maturity; and finally spoke of Bartlett,

"The lion of the law ;
All Court Street trembles when he leaves his den,
Clad in the pomp of fourscore years and ten."

These lines were read on the 22d of February, 1889; yet if any student of English literature should be given that couplet by itself, he would probably guess it to be the work of some contemporary of Alexander Pope. The tr which appears here characterizes Holmes's occa verse throughout. So able a critic as Mr. Stedman holds it to characterize all his poetry. In m Holmes's temper was that of a bygone t Stedman happily observes, his verse is r eighteenth-century literature, but rathe

The more one considers Holmes's w

*Andover Hill.

the more significant one finds this criticism. Revivals of the eighteenth century—*Henry Esmond*, for example, or Mr. Dobson's essays—have been common enough in our own day. Indeed modern artists in general are quite as apt to express themselves in the manner of some bygone age as in any spontaneously characteristic of their own time. Holmes, however, seems as far from artificial in manner as if he had flourished at a time which had an instinctively settled style of its own. That his manner proves so much in the spirit of the eighteenth century, accordingly, indicates something characteristic not only of the man, but of the world about him. For full fifty years, as we have seen, he rarely stirred from New England; no other writer lived under such completely local circumstances. In view of this fact, his manner, so like that prevalent in English literature of a hundred years before, seems a fresh bit of evidence that the literary temper of America has lagged behind that of the mother country.

The Boston where Holmes lived, however, and where for years he was so eminent a social figure, was the same Boston which was thrilling with all the fervid vagaries of our Renaissance. Deeply conservative in external temper, loving social order, and distrusting vagaries of thought and of conduct alike, Holmes had small sympathy with extravagances of Transcendentalism or of reform; but could not have been truly contemporary with these without catching something of their spirit. So that he was what Mr. Stedman has called him, the eighteenth century, in another he was seer of the Renaissance.

out him, he was seized with an impulse and to report it. What chiefly dis-

tinguishes him from the rest is that they were essentially romantic. They were attracted by ideal philosophy and mediæval poetry. History they found most stimulating and satisfying when it appealed to romantic emotion. In this they delighted with all the ardor of a race which for two hundred years had been æsthetically starved. America, however, had been poor in another range of human experience. Throughout Europe, the eighteenth century was a period of alert common sense, observing life keenly, commenting on it with astonishing wit, but generally regarding romantic emotion with distrust. And New England, when its Renaissance finally dawned, lacked not only the untrammelled romanticism of mediæval tradition, but also the eager rationalism which had been the most characteristic trait of eighteenth-century Europe.

Rationalism.

This feature of the new learning Holmes found most congenial. In the form and spirit of his verse, as Mr. Stedman says, there is something which makes him a survival of the eighteenth century; and though the form of his prose is individual, its spirit seems as essentially that of the eighteenth century as if every line of his essays and novels had been thrown into heroic couplets.

The first instalment of his final *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*—revived after the casual interruption of twenty-five years—appeared in the first number of the *Atlantic Monthly* in the autumn of 1857. Within the next years Holmes produced four volumes of such essays as *Autocrat*,* three more or less formal novels†

* *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*, 1860; *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, 1872; *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*, 1883; *Over the Teacups*, 1891.

† *Elsie Venner*, 1861; *The Guardian Angel*, 1867; *A Mortal Antipathy*, 1885.

cellent memoirs of Motley (1879) and of Emerson (1885). Throughout this prose work of his maturity and his age,—he was nearly fifty years old when it began,—one feels the shrewd, swift, volatile mind of a witty man of the world. One feels, too, the temper of a trained though not very learned man of science, whose education and professional experience combined with native good sense to make him understand the value of demonstrable fact. One feels almost as surely another trait. Holmes could not have been a Bostonian during those years of Renaissance when Boston was the intellectual centre of America, without keen interest in something like mysticism; but beyond any other New England man of his time Holmes treats mystical vagaries as only fancies,—beautiful, perhaps, and stimulating, but inherently beyond the range of assertion as distinguished from speculation. In one sense no Transcendentalist more constantly devoted himself to the task of proving all things and holding fast those which were good. From beginning to end, however, Holmes knew that things can truly be proved only by observation and experiment. So just as in our final view of the New England Renaissance Ticknor seems its most eminent scholar, Longfellow its most congenial poet, and Lowell its deepest humanist, so Holmes seems its one uncompromising rationalist.

For this rationalism, in addition to the fact that he was
most lifelong student of science, Holmes had a deeply
al reason. His youth had been surrounded by
test Calvinism, at a moment when the spiritual
his native region was at last taking its enfran-
ian form. The whole austerity of the old
s stern limitation of intellectual and spir-
ad been within his personal experience

at the period of life when impressions sink deepest. He early developed the liberal and kindly rationalism so admirably expressed in his personal and literary career. The dogmas of the elder creed, however, were seared into his brain; he could never quite forget them. And believing them untrue, he never ceased his efforts to refute them. These attacks were sometimes indirect, as in *Elsie Venner*, or in many passages from his Breakfast Table series. In his essay on Edwards, and elsewhere, they were direct.

Summary

So Holmes, the wittiest and happiest of New England social figures, the most finished as well as the most tenderly sentimental maker of our occasional verse, who wrote so much even of his most serious work with the temper and the manner of a wit, proves to have another aspect. Among our men of letters this rationalist was the most sturdy, the most militant, the most pitiless enemy of what he believed to be a superstition whose tyranny over his childhood had left lifelong scars. That he never relaxed his fight shows rare courage. From beginning to end Holmes thus seems a survivor of the eighteenth century. Brave, rationalistic attack on outworn superstitions is the bravest note of that past epoch.

XIV

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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In our study of the New England Renaissance we have glanced at Emerson, whom we may call its prophet; at Whittier, who so admirably phrased its aspirations for reform; at Longfellow, its academic poet; at Lowell, its humanist; and at Holmes, its rationalist. The period produced but one other literary figure of equal eminence with these,—Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), above and beyond the others an artist.

Life.

Hawthorne came from a family eminent in early colonial days, but long lapsed into obscurity. His father, a ship captain of the period when New England commerce was most vigorous, died in Guiana when Hawthorne was only four years old; and the boy, who had been born at Salem, grew up there in his mother's care, singularly solitary. In 1821 he went to Bowdoin College, where he was a

classmate of Longfellow, and an intimate friend of Franklin Pierce, afterwards President of the United States.

For fourteen years after his graduation from Bowdoin Hawthorne lived with his mother at Salem, so quietly that his existence was hardly known to the townsfolk of that gossipy little Yankee seaport. He spent much time indoors, constantly writing, but neither successful nor generally recognized as an author. He took long solitary walks, and his personal appearance is said to have been romantic and picturesque. In 1839 he was appointed a clerk in the Boston Custom House; in 1841 the spoils system turned him out of office, and for a few months he was at Brook Farm. The next year he married, and from then until 1846 he lived at Concord, writing and by this time recognized as a writer of short stories. From 1846 to 1849 he was Surveyor in the Custom House of Salem. During the ensuing four years, when he resided at various places in Massachusetts, he produced his three most characteristic long books—*The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Blithedale Romance*—as well as his two volumes of mythological stories for children, *The Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*. In 1853 President Pierce made him Consul at Liverpool. He remained abroad until 1860, passing some time during his later stay there in Italy. From this experience resulted *The Marble Faun*. In 1860 he came home and returned to Concord, where he lived thenceforth.

Chronological Position.

Chronologically, Hawthorne's position in New England literature seems earlier than that of his contemporaries at whom we have glanced. He was only a year younger than Emerson, he was three years older than Longfellow and Whittier, five years older than Holmes,

and fifteen years older than Lowell. He died during the Civil War; and Emerson and Longfellow survived until 1882, Lowell till 1891, Whittier till 1892, and Holmes till 1894. Though Hawthorne, however, was the first to die of this little company, he had been a fellow-writer with them during the thirty years when the full literary career of all had declared itself. In the time which followed Hawthorne's death, the survivors wrote and published copiously; but none produced anything which much altered the reputation he had achieved while Hawthorne was still alive. So far as character goes, in short, the literature of renascent New England was virtually complete in 1864.

Hawthorne, above all, an Artist.

Under such circumstances chronology becomes accidental. The order in which to consider contemporaries is a question simply of their relative character. And we had good reason for reserving Hawthorne till the last; for above all the rest, as we have already remarked, he was an artist. His posthumously published note-books* show him freshly impressed almost every day with some aspect of life which aroused in him concrete reaction. He actually published tales enough to establish more than one literary reputation, yet these note-books

* *Passages from the American Note-Books*, 1868; *Passages from the English Note-Books*, 1870; *Passages from the French and Italian Note-Books*, 1871.

prove what a wealth of imaginative impulse he never coined into finished literary form. They reveal, too, another characteristic fact. Though Hawthorne wrote hardly any verse, he was a genuine poet. His only vehicle of expression was language, and to him language meant not

AN EARLY HOME OF HAWTHORNE, OLD MANSE, CONCORD.

only words but rhythm too. Hence, even in memoranda which he never expected to stray beyond his note-books, you feel the constant touch of one whose meaning is so subtle that its most careless expression must fall into delicately careful phrasing.

Such a temperament would inevitably have declared itself anywhere. Some critics have accordingly lamented the accident which confined Hawthorne's experience for almost fifty years to isolated, æsthetically starved New England. In this opinion there is considerable justice. The extreme localism of Hawthorne's life, until his ma-

turity was passing into age, may very likely have made world literature poorer. *The Marble Faun* is our only indication of what he might have done if his sensitive youth had been exposed to the unfathomably human influence of Europe. Yet, whatever our loss, we can hardly regret an accident so fortunate to the literature of New England.

Hawthorne, whose artistic temperament would have been remarkable anywhere, chanced to be born in an old Yankee seaport, then just at its zenith, but soon to be stricken by the Embargo, and swiftly to be surpassed by a more prosperous neighbor. From Salem he visited those woods of Maine which were still so primeval as to recall the shadowy forests whose mystery confronted the immigrant Puritans. Then, just when Transcendentalism was most in the air, he lived for a while in Boston, had a glimpse of Brook Farm, passed more than one year in the Old Manse at Concord, and finally strayed among the hills of Berkshire. Until he set sail for England, however, he had never known any earthly region which had not traditionally been dominated by the spirit of the Puritans; nor any which in his own time was not alive, so far as life was in it, with the spirit of the New England Renaissance.

Environment.

In considering this period, we have hitherto dwelt only on its most obvious aspect. Like any revelation of new life, it seemed to open the prospect of an illimitably excellent future. Amid such buoyant hopes people think little of the past, tending indeed to regard it like some night of darkness to which at last the dawn has brought an end. They forget the infinite mysteries of the night, its terrors and its dreamy beauties, and the courage of those who

throughout its tremulous course have watched and prayed. So when the dawn comes they forget that the birth of day is the death of night. Thus the men of our New England Renaissance forgot that their new, enfranchised life and literature meant the final passing of that elder New England so hopefully founded by the Puritan fathers. As our Renaissance has passed its swift zenith, and begun itself to recede into dimming memory, we can see more plainly than of old this tragic aspect of its earthly course. The world in which Hawthorne lived and wrote was not only a world where new ideals were springing into life, it was a world, too, where the old ideals were suffering their agony.

What Hawthorne Wrote About.

Of all our men of letters Hawthorne was most sensitive to this phase of the time when they flourished together. He was not, like Emerson, a prophet striving to glean truth from unexplored fields of eternity; he was not, like Whittier, a patient limner of simple nature, or a passionate advocate of moral reform; he was not, like Longfellow or Lowell, a loving student of world literature, moved by erudition to the expression of what meaning he had found in the records of a wonderful foreign past; he was not, like Holmes, a combatant who, with all the vivacity of lifelong wit and all the method of scientific training, rationally attacked the chimeras of his time; he was an artist, who lived for nearly fifty years only in his native country, daily stirred to attempt expression of what our Yankee life meant. Of all our men of letters he was the most indigenous.

Hawthorne Compared with his English Contemporaries.

So a hasty comparison of his work with some which was produced in England during the same years may help to define our notion of what the peculiar trait of American letters has been. His first collection of *Twice-told Tales* appeared in 1837; in England, where Queen

Victoria had just come to the throne, Dickens published *Oliver Twist*, and Thackeray *The Yellowplush Papers*. The second series of *Twice-told Tales* came in 1842, when Bulwer published *Zanoni*, Dickens his *American Notes*, and Macaulay his *Lays*. In 1846, when Hawthorne published the *Mosses from an Old Manse*, Dickens published *Dombey and Son*. In 1850, the year of *The Scarlet Letter*, came Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, Carlyle's *Latter-day Pamphlets*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam;* in 1851, along with *The House of the Seven Gables*, came Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows* and Ruskin's *Stones of Venice;* in 1852, with *The Blithedale Romance*, came Dickens's *Bleak House*, Charles Reade's *Peg Woffington*, and Thackeray's *Henry Esmond;* in 1853, along with *Tanglewood Tales*, came Kingsley's *Hypatia*, Bulwer's *My Novel*, and Miss Yonge's *Heir of Redclyffe;* and in the year of *The Marble Faun* (1860) came Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and the last volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. The list is long enough for our purpose. It shows that, like Irving and Poe, the two Americans who preceded him as literary artists, Hawthorne proves, the moment you compare him with the contemporary writers of England, to be gifted or hampered with a pervasive sense of form which one is half disposed to call classic.

The Result.

Yet that term "classic," applied even to Irving, and still more to Poe or Hawthorne, must seem paradoxical. Such terms as "romantic" and "classic" are bewildering; but for general purposes one would not go far wrong who should include under the term "classic" that sort of human impulse which reached its highest form in the fine arts of

Greece, and under the term "romantic" that which most nearly approached realization in the art and the literature of mediæval Europe. The essence of classic art is perhaps that the artist realizes the limits of his conception, and within those limits endeavors to make his expression com-

WAYSIDE, CONCORD, HOME OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

pletely beautiful. The essence of the romantic spirit is that the artist, whatever his conception, is always aware of the infinite mysteries which lie beyond it.

The Romantic Spirit in Early American Fiction.

Now, even the stories of Irving are pervaded with one kind of romantic temper—that which delights in the splendors of a vanished past, and in the mysteries of supernatural fancy. Something more deeply romantic underlies the inarticulate work of Brockden Brown, and still more the poems and the tales of Poe. Both Brown and Poe had a profound sense of what horror may lurk in the mysteries which we call supernatural. Even Brown, however, and surely Poe, conceived these melodramatically. In common

with Irving and Poe, Hawthorne had an instinctive tendency to something like classic precision of form. In common with them he possessed, too, a constant sensitiveness to the mysteries of romantic sentiment; but the romanticism of Hawthorne differs from that of either Poe or Irving as distinctly as it differs from that of Brockden Brown. In Hawthorne's there is no trace of artificiality. Beyond human life he felt not only the fact of mystery—he felt the mysteries which are truly there.

Puritanism as a Motive of Art.

In the mere fact of romantic temper Hawthorne is broadly American, typically native to this new world which has been so starved of antiquity. In the fact that his romantic spirit is fundamentally true he proves individual, and more at one than our other artists with the ancestral spirit of New England. The darkly passionate idealism of the Puritans had involved a tendency towards conceptions which when they reached artistic form must be romantic. The phase of mystery on which the grim dogmas of these past generations incessantly dwelt lies in the world-old facts of evil and sin and suffering. Now Hawthorne had strayed far from Puritan dogma. His nature, however, could never shake off the temperamental earnestness of the Puritans. Throughout his work, he is most characteristic when in endlessly varied form he expresses that constant, haunting sense of ancestral sin in which his Puritan forefathers found endless warrant for their Calvinistic doctrines. With the Puritans, of course, this sense of sin was a conviction of fact; Hawthorne, on the other hand, felt it only as a matter of emotional experience. To him Puritanism was no longer a motive of life; in final ripeness it had become a motive of art.

Hawthorne's Artistic Conscience.

Another aspect of this deep sense of sin and mystery shows us that it involves morbid development of conscience. Conscience in its artistic form Hawthorne displays throughout; and though artistic conscience be very different from moral, the two have in common an aspiration toward beauty. For all its perversities of outward form, the impulse of the moral conscience is really toward beauty of conduct; artistic conscience is a persistent, strenuous impulse toward beauty of expression. The literature of America has shown this latter trait more frequently than that of England; one feels it even in Brockden Brown, one feels it strongly in Irving and Poe, one feels it in the delicately sentimental lines of Bryant, and one feels it now and again through most of the expression of renascent New England. Whatever American writers have achieved, they have constantly tried to do their best. Hawthorne, we have seen, surpassed his countrymen in the genuineness of his artistic impulse; he surpassed them, too, in the tormenting insistence of his artistic conscience. In his choice of words and, above all, in the delicacy of his very subtle rhythm, he seems never to have relaxed his effort to write as beautifully as he could. Thus he displays the ancestral conscience of New England in finally exquisite form.

Of course he has limits. Comparing his work with the contemporary work of England, one is aware of its classically careful form, of its profoundly romantic sentiment, and of its admirable artistic conscience. One grows aware, at the same time, of its unmistakable rusticity; in turns of thought as well as of phrase one feels monotony, provincialism, a certain thinness. These limits, however, prove, like his merits, to be deeply characteristic of the New England which surrounded his life.

Summary. It is hard to sum up the impression which such a writer makes. He was ideal, of course, in temper; he was introspective, with all the self-searching instinct of his ancestry; he was solitary; he was permeated with a sense of the mysteries of life and sin; and by pondering over them he tended to exaggerate them more and more. In a dozen aspects he seems typically Puritan. His artistic conscience, however, as alert as that of any pagan, impelled him constantly to realize in his work those forms which should most beautifully embody the ideals of his incessantly creative imagination. Thus he grew to be of all our writers the least imitative, the most surely individual. The circumstances of his life combined with the sensitiveness of his nature to make his individuality indigenous. Beyond any one else he expresses the deepest temper of that New England race which brought him forth, and which now, at least in the phases we have known, seems vanishing from the earth.

When we ask what that race has contributed to human expression, we must not let our patriotism betray our judgment. The literature of New England is not supremely great. Of the men we have scrutinized Emerson and Hawthorne seem the most memorable. And Emerson has vagaries which may well justify a doubt whether his work is among those few final records of human wisdom which are imperishable Scriptures. And, though Hawthorne's tales possess sincerity of motive and beauty of form, they reveal at best a phase of human nature whose limits are obvious. As we look back at the New England now fading into the past, however, we find in it, if not positive magnitude of achievement, at least qualities which go far to warrant the national pride in its utterances which

we have loved to believe justified. For throughout, its literature is sincere and pure and sweet.

The emigrants to New England were native Elizabethans,—stern and peculiar, but still temperamentally contemporary with Shakspere and the rest. In two centuries and a half, national experience forced English life and letters through many various phases, until at last the old country began to breed that fixed, conservative John Bull who has so lost Elizabethan spontaneity, versatility, and enthusiasm. In America, meantime, national inexperience kept the elder temper little changed until at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was aroused by the world-movement of revolution. Then, at last, our ancestral America, which had so unwittingly lingered behind the mother country, awoke. In the flush of its waking, it strove to express the meaning of life; and the meaning of its life was the story of what two hundred years of national inexperience had wrought for a race of Elizabethan Puritans. Its utterances may well prove lacking in scope, in greatness; the days to come may well prove them of little lasting power; but nothing can obscure their beautiful purity of spirit.

For all its inexperience, New England life has been human. Its literal records are no more free than those of other regions and times from the greed and the lust, the trickery and the squalor, which everywhere defile earthly existence. What marks it apart is the childlike persistency of its ideals. Its nobler minds, who have left their records in its literature, retained something of the old spontaneity, the old versatility, the old enthusiasm of ancestral England. They retained, too, even more than they knew of that ardor for absolute truth which animated the grave

fathers of the emigration. Their innocence of worldly wisdom led them to undue confidence in the excellence of human nature; the simplicity of their national past blinded them to the complexity of the days even now at hand, while the sod still lies light on their graves. We used to believe them heralds of the future; already we begin to perceive that they were rather chroniclers of times which shall be no more. Yet, whatever comes, they possessed traits for which we may always give them unstinted reverence; for humanity must always find inspiring the record of bravely confident aspiration toward righteousness.

BOOK VI

THE REST OF THE STORY

BOOK VI

THE REST OF THE STORY

I

NEW YORK SINCE 1857

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Long as we have dwelt on the Renaissance of New England, we can hardly have forgotten that the first considerable American literary expression developed in the Middle States. To that region we must now turn again. The *Atlantic Monthly*, we remember, was started in 1857. That same year saw also the foundation of *Harper's Weekly* in New York. At that time *Harper's New Monthly Mag-*

azine had been in existence for seven years; and the two New York newspapers which have maintained closest relation with literary matters, the *Evening Post* and the *Tribune*, had long been thoroughly established. The other periodicals which now mark New York as the literary centre of the United States were not yet founded. So in turning to New York once more we may conveniently revert to 1857.

That year was marked throughout America by financial panic. The great expansion of the country had resulted in a general extension of credit and in a general overdevelopment of enterprises, particularly of railroads, which was bound to involve reaction. For a little while material progress came to a standstill. It was only when material progress was renewed, partly under the stimulus of the Civil War, that the overwhelming superiority of New York as a centre of material prosperity made itself finally felt.

Commercial Importance.

Yet, throughout the century, the preponderance of New York had been declaring itself. In 1800 it had 60,000 inhabitants to only 24,000 in Boston. In 1830, when it had 200,000 inhabitants, Boston had only 61,000; and by 1857 the population of New York was at least three-quarters of a million, while that of Boston still proportionally lagged behind. From the time when the Erie Canal was opened, in fact, the geographical position of New York had already made that city by far the most considerable in America. Less than three hundred miles from Boston, it was and it remains as central as Boston is isolated.

New York, however, has never been a political capital. In this respect its contrast with Boston is most marked. Though Boston has been the capital only of

the small State of Massachusetts, this small State has always been the most important of isolated New England. Boston has accordingly enjoyed not only the commercial and economic supremacy of the region, but also such supremacy as comes from attracting and diffusing the most important influences of local public life. In this aspect Boston on a small scale resembles the great capitals of the world. New York, on the other hand, commercially and financially the most important spot in America, has never been much else. It has always had to seek legislation from a much smaller city more than a hundred miles away; and thither it has always had to take for decision every question carried to its court of highest appeal. Two natural results have followed. In the absence of far-reaching political activity, emphasis on merely local politics has been disproportionate; and meanwhile the city, which has prospered only from such preponderatingly material causes, has appeared excessively material in general character.

Material Character.

New York has consequently lacked, and perhaps must always lack, some of those advantages which make a true capital intellectually stimulating. Its extraordinary growth has nevertheless brought into being there something more like metropolitan life than has yet existed elsewhere in America. Material development on so vast a scale cannot help involving intellectual activity. New York has accordingly developed not only material prosperity, but also higher life. From the moment when the Renaissance of New England began to decline, New York has more and more certainly been asserting itself as the intellectual and artistic centre of America.

For many years our principal publishers have been

centred there; so have the periodicals which are most generally read throughout the country. *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, begun in 1853, is now no more; but during its memorable existence it counted among its contributors the chief American writers of its time. *Harper's Magazine*, which dates from 1850, is still full of life; and so are *Harper's Weekly*, which dates from 1857; and the *Century Magazine*, founded as *Scribner's Monthly* in 1870, and translated to its present name in 1881; and *Scribner's Magazine*, founded in 1887; and more. Some twenty years ago the old *North American Review* was bought by New York people and its title transferred there to a monthly periodical of less severe character than the old quarterly so dear to New England tradition. In New York are published the chief American weekly papers which seriously discuss public and literary affairs, *The Nation* and *The Outlook;* and there are comic weeklies as well,—*Puck* and *Life*, and more. The list might go on endlessly; but for our purposes this is enough. The literary activity involved in such production is incalculably greater than New England ever dreamed of.

Periodicals.

All the same, this activity has been distinguished from the literary activity of renascent New England in two rather marked ways. The first is that, in spite of its magnitude, it is less conspicuous in New York than the old *North American Review* or even the *Dial*, and still more than the earlier volumes of the *Atlantic Monthly* were in their contemporary Boston. As one looks back at Boston between 1800 and 1864, one inclines to feel that its intellectual life was rather more important than its material, and that even on the spot this intellectual importance was appreciated. In New York, however important our contemporary

literary expression, material activity is more important still. The second way in which literary New York may be distinguished from our elder literary Boston is that contemporary letters in New York have become oddly impersonal. You know the names of publishers, you know the names of magazines, but in general you have rather vague notions of who is writing.

Among those who have most influenced literary activity under these circumstances was a man who himself was not precisely a man of letters. HORACE GREELEY (1811–1872) came to New York as a poor country boy in 1831; by 1841 he had established the *Tribune* and become its editor. He is best remembered in his later years when the *Tribune* was politically an uncompromising advocate of reform. After the triumph of antislavery, Greeley finally turned his wrath against the corrupt politics in the Republican party, a party of which he had previously been a fervent, if candid, friend. His public career closed with his unsuccessful candidacy for the Presidency against Grant in 1872. His actual books are miscellaneous: *The American Conflict*, 1864–66; *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 1868; *What I know of Farming*, 1871. The most definitely remembered of his utterances is his frequent advice to youth who sought success: "Go West, young man; go West." This pronounced, eccentric temper, which somewhat grotesquely combined simplicity and shrewdness, seems remote from literature. But, all the while that the *Tribune* politically expounded extreme reform, it remained, in its relation to literary criticism, vigorously orthodox. Greeley.

Greeley naturally sympathized with many of the New England men at whom we have glanced. At one time o·

another he invited their co-operation with the *Tribune* and thus helped to bring to New York a number of memorable literary people. Charles Anderson Dana was long on the staff of the *Tribune*, and so was George William Curtis. For a year or two Margaret Fuller was in charge of the *Tribune's* literary criticism; she was followed by George Ripley, who continued the work all his life. Nor did the *Tribune* draw its literary strength only from New England. The list of familiar names, by no means limited to those of New England origin, might extend indefinitely. However long or short, it would certainly include the name of Bayard Taylor, whose career fairly represents the condition of New York letters during the period immediately following the Knickerbocker School.

Bayard Taylor.

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825–1878) was a Pennsylvanian, born of Quaker parentage. He had only a common-school education, but he loved literature, and by the time he was sixteen years old he was publishing poems in local newspapers. At nineteen he had attracted the attention of men of letters and had been associated with Greeley in one of the journalistic ventures which preceded the *Tribune*. So in 1844 Taylor brought out a volume of poems; and in the same year he was commissioned by the *Tribune* to go abroad and write home letters of travel. He spent two years in strolling through Europe on foot. The records of this journey began those books of travel which he continued publishing for thirty years. Meanwhile he gave lectures, wrote for the *Tribune*, and brought out many volumes of poems and novels; and in 1871 he published a translation of Goethe's *Faust* in the original metres. An elaborate life of Goethe, which he had planned, was fatally prevented. Appointed Minister to Germany

by President Hayes, he died soon after his arrival at Berlin.

Taylor's most meritorious work is his translation of *Faust*. He put before himself the task of reproducing the original metres, and so far as possible the original rhymes, of that extremely complex poem. The result in nowise resembles normal English; but he never undertook to turn *Faust* into an English poem; his object was rather to reproduce in English words the effect made upon his mind by prolonged, sympathetic, enthusiastic study of the German masterpiece. Whatever the positive value of his translation, he achieved the rare practical result of indicating the power and beauty of Goethe's style, as well as of his meaning. So if in years to come Taylor's memory survives it will probably be for this achievement in which he made no attempt at originality.

It is hardly an accident that the man of letters who, since Taylor's time, has been the most eminent in New York, should also have done much of his journalistic work in connection with the *Tribune*. EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (1833–), born at Hartford, Connecticut, went for a while to Yale, later became a journalist, and still later a broker, in New York. His publications include a wide variety of admirable poems, finally collected in 1897; two masterly anthologies—the Victorian, published in 1895, and the American, published in 1900; critical works which have done more than those of any other living American to stimulate appreciative delight in poetry; and that *Library of American Literature* which must long remain the standard book of reference for all students of the subject. Stedman.

Considerable as this literary work must always seem,

however, it is by no means the sum of Mr. Stedman's service to literature in America during the past thirty years. Few men have ever enjoyed a temperament more genuinely and widely friendly. On the one hand, he has been the constant and helpful friend of almost every one who has achieved literary recognition. On the other hand, he has been to unobtrusive aspirants for such recognition, a patient and affectionate counsellor. His eager commendation of all that is good, his gentle correction of error, and his sturdy impatience of folly will make him, in the memory of all who have had the happiness to know him, the embodiment of stimulating literary friendship.

It would be pleasant to dwell longer here. But we must return to the *Tribune*, from which, in a measure, Stedman started. From the *Tribune* there also started the virtual
C. A. Dana. founders of two other conspicuous journals. CHARLES ANDERSON DANA (1819–1897), one of the original Brook Farmers, joined the *Tribune* in 1847, resigned in 1862 to become Assistant Secretary of War, and in 1868 assumed the direction of the *Sun*. From this time until his death, Dana's position was one of great power. But the reckless personality of his journalistic methods—in startling contrast with the gentle idealism of his earlier life—isolated him from many old friends. To one ideal he remained constant. The *Sun* was always admirably written. Besides his journalistic work, Dana wrote a life of Grant and two volumes of recollections of the Civil War. Concerning HENRY JARVIS RAYMOND (1820–1869) it is sufficient to remember that, after assisting Greeley on the *Tribune*, he established the *Times* in 1851, and conducted it with marked ability as long as he lived.

A third journalist on whom any such consideration as

ours must touch was of different origin. EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN (1831–1900) was born in Ireland, graduated from Queen's College, Belfast, and studied law at the Middle Temple, London. He travelled in the United States in 1856, was admitted to the New York bar in 1858, and was correspondent for a London newspaper during the Civil War. In 1865 he became editor of the *Nation;* in 1866, its proprietor. His editorial work here, and his separately published studies of American government,—*Problems of Modern Democracy*, 1896; and *Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy*, 1898,—show great wisdom and remarkable mastery of style and structure. By birth, however, Godkin was not American, but Irish. And, for all the excellence of his intentions, it is doubtful whether he ever quite understood the real temper of that democracy which he strove so earnestly to chasten. Godkin.

To return once more to the *Tribune*, it was through this paper that some of the chief magazine writers of New York made their beginning. None of them has been more influential than GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824–1892). After Brook Farm and some foreign travel, Curtis settled in New York, where he wrote for the *Tribune*, edited *Putnam's Magazine*, and finally, in 1853, took the "Easy Chair" of *Harper's Monthly*, for which he thereafter wrote constantly until his death. His published works include three volumes of essays *From the Easy Chair* (1892, 1893, 1894), some less important novels and books of travel, and three large volumes of speeches. Speeches and essays alike show Curtis to have been equally graceful and earnest in advocating social and political reforms. Of all the New England reformers, he was perhaps the least distorted. He ripened to the end; he never really changed. Curtis.

The "Easy Chair" of *Harper's Monthly*, left vacant by the death of Curtis, was next occupied by CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER (1829–1900), who, in addition to these editorial essays, wrote some charming sketches of out-door life, volumes of travel, an excellent biography of Washington Irving, and several novels. Neither Warner's reserve nor his preoccupation with social problems blunted his humor or spoiled his simplicity of heart; but he never achieved a masterpiece.

Warner.

Another New York editor of importance was Dr. JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819–1888). He was born in western Massachusetts. He took his medical degree at a small college in Pittsfield; he was a contributor to the *Knickerbocker;* he was for a time Superintendent of Public Schools in Missouri; and in 1849 he became editor of the *Springfield Republican*. With this paper he retained his connection for seventeen years, at the end of which, partly through his shrewd agency, the *Springfield Republican* had become widely influential. In 1870 he became editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, which later took the name of the *Century* and of which he remained in charge until his death. Dr. Holland was not only a respectable and successful journalist, but a welcome lecturer on various social topics, and the writer of numerous books. Among these were a popular *Life of Lincoln* (1865); three or four novels which had considerable success, and some poems which appealed to a large, uncritical public. His most characteristic writings, however, were didactic essays, the most successful of which were the series entitled *Timothy Titcomb's Letters to Young People* (1858). Dr. Holland's work is saved from indignity by its apparent unconsciousness of limitation.

Holland.

His honesty, his kindness, and his sound moral sense endeared him to every-day people, and did much to strengthen homely ideals.

Gilder.

Dr. Holland's successor as editor of the *Century* was RICHARD WATSON GILDER (1844–). Besides controlling the *Century* with marked skill, Mr. Gilder has found time to publish several volumes of very carefully finished verses and to interest himself in various causes of reform. Among the men of letters still flourishing in New York, his eminence both as an editor and as a poet combine with his graceful culture to make him an admirable exponent of sound literary tradition.

The great mass of material which has appeared during the last forty years in the magazines thus ably edited, has not infrequently included serious essays and popular expositions of technical scholarship. One or two writers of such matter must serve us for examples of a numerous and respectable group.

Scholarship.

White.

RICHARD GRANT WHITE (1821–1885), after trying other occupations, settled down, before he was twenty-five years old, as a professional critic. With no very special training, he produced an edition of Shakspere, and two or three books on the English language. He had a fondness meanwhile for anonymous writing; so for some time he was not recognized as the author of the *New Gospel of Peace* (1863–66). In burlesque scriptural style, it attacked the so-called "Copperheads," who denied the constitutional right of the Federal Government to maintain the Union by force. Thus a clever and versatile critical journalist, who sincerely and ardently assumed the authority of a serious scholar, came nearest to success in an irreverent political satire.

Matthews. To come to living men, BRANDER MATTHEWS (1852–) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He graduated from Columbia University, where he is now Professor of Dramatic Literature. He has published, in addition to short stories in magazines, some excellent books on the novel and on the drama.

Woodberry. GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY (1855–), a native of Massachusetts, and a graduate of Harvard, was for many years a professor at Columbia. During all this time he has been constantly engaged in serious literary work. He has won acknowledged distinction as a teacher, a critic, and a poet; and his biographies of Poe and of Hawthorne are the best we have.

Nor has scholarship in New York confined itself to literary matters. To go no further, New York is the

Mahan. home of Captain ALFRED THAYER MAHAN (1840–), whose works on naval history are recognized as authoritative everywhere.

Fiction. Our present concern, however, is chiefly with literature, as distinguished from history or other scholarship. To return to recent magazines, the most popular part of their contents has consisted not of essays or severer studies, but of fiction in the form of short stories or serial novels. The writers of this fiction are so numerous and so even in merit that a few names must serve here to represent many. Two delightful writers of this group are

Bunner. no more. HENRY CUYLER BUNNER (1855–1896), for years editor of *Puck*, was so busy a journalist that only persistent efforts gave him time for any but his regular work. The verses and stories which he left are therefore only a tantalizing token of what might have been had he had more leisure, or had he been spared beyond

early middle life. His apparently ephemeral work, however, is memorably sympathetic, sensitive, and winning. FRANK RICHARD STOCKTON (1834–1903), among whose many stories are *Rudder Grange* (1879) and *The Lady or the Tiger* (1884), was notable for his calmly ingenious management of fantastically impossible plots and situations. And we might easily recall other pleasant writers prematurely gone. Stockton.

Among those still living are many on whom we might linger. But we can glance now at only two or three. Mrs. FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT (1849–), for example, whose *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886) had international success, set fashions in children's clothes, and almost added a new figure to literary tradition, is a remarkably skilful writer of readable narrative. RICHARD HARDING DAVIS (1864–), author of books of travel, short stories of New York life, and some successful novels, combines the instinctive insight of a born journalist with the practical skill of an invariably readable writer of fiction. And of all the novelists who have lately appeared in New York, Mrs. EDITH WHARTON (1862–) is the most remarkable. For some time she was known only as an occasional writer of exquisitely finished verse, and of stories in which a power of analysis similar to that of Henry James was combined with almost Gallic precision of effect. In 1902 appeared her only long novel, *The Valley of Decision*. This remarkable study of Italian life during the last years of the eighteenth century is among the few books which seem better each time you open it. Nothing written in America shows more vivid power of imagination, more firm grasp of subject, more punctilious mastery of style, or more admirably pervasive artistic conscience. Mrs. Burnett. Davis. Mrs. Wharton.

We must hasten on. We have glanced at two of the forms which seem growing to literary ripeness in New York—the newspaper and the popular magazine. There is only one other form whose present popularity in America is anything like so considerable; this is the stage. So far, to be sure, the American theatre has produced no work which can claim literary consideration. During the last half-century, on the other hand, the American stage has developed all over the country a popularity and an organization which seem favorable to literary prospects. At the beginning of this century there were very few theatres in the United States; to-day travelling dramatic companies patrol the continent. Every town has its theatre, and every theatre its audience. Until now, to be sure, the plays most popular in America have generally come straight from Europe, and the plays made here have been apt unintelligently to follow European models. Now and again, however, there have appeared signs that various types of American character could be represented on the stage with great popular effect; and the rapid growth of the American theatre has provided us with an increasing number of skilful actors. A large though thoughtless public of theatre-goers, a school of professional actors who can intelligently present a wide variety of character, and a tendency on the part of American theatrical men to produce, amid stupidly conventional surroundings, vivid studies from life, again represent conditions of promise. If a dramatist of commanding power should arise in this country, he might find ready more than a few of the conditions from which lasting dramatic literatures have flashed into existence.

The Stage.

The stage, of course, though centred in New York, is

by no means limited to that city. Nor is New York the only region in the Middle States where literature has grown during the past thirty years. Philadelphia, during that period, has contributed to American letters several names which cannot be neglected. GEORGE HENRY BOKER (1823–1890) was a dramatic poet, whose work, begun so long ago as 1847, is still worth reading. Mr. HENRY CHARLES LEA'S (1825–) works on ecclesiastical history are important and authoritative. Dr. HORACE HOWARD FURNESS'S (1833–) variorum edition of Shakspere is the most comprehensive and satisfactory setting forth which has ever been made of the plays with which he has dealt. Dr. WEIR MITCHELL (1830–) who is among the most eminent of American physicians, has produced during his later years poems and novels which would have given him fame by themselves. And Mr. OWEN WISTER'S (1860–) stories of Western life are likely to become the permanent record in literature of a passing epoch in our national life.

Philadelphia.

Every one of the writers at whom we have now glanced may perhaps prove in years to come worthy of more attention than it has been in our power, as contemporaries, to bestow. Doubtless, too, we might have touched on many more; but these would only have emphasized the truth which must long ago have forced itself upon us. This contemporary writing is too near us for confident summary. All we can surely say is that our Middle States, as they used to be called, are now dominated by New York. This town, whose domination for the moment is not only local but national, owes its predominance to that outburst of material force which throughout the victorious North followed the period of the Civil War. What may come of it no one can tell.

Summary.

Hardly anything about it is as yet distinct. There is, however, one exception. The Middle States, and to a great degree the city of New York itself, produced one eccentric literary figure, who has emerged into an isolation sometimes believed eminent. This is Walt Whitman.

II

WALT WHITMAN

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Selections: *Carpenter, 389–402; Griswold, *Poets*, 626–627; Stedman, 221–232; *Stedman and Hutchinson, VII, 501–513.

Walt Whitman (1819–1892) was almost exactly contemporary with Lowell. No two lives could have been much more different. Lowell, the son of a minister, closely related to the best people of New England, lived amid the gentlest academic and social influences in America. Whitman was the son of a carpenter and builder on the outskirts of Brooklyn; the only New England man of letters equally humble in origin was Whittier. Life.

The contrast between Whitman and Whittier, however, is almost as marked as that between Whitman and Lowell. Whittier, the child of a Quaker farmer in the Yankee country, grew up and lived almost all his life amid guileless influences Whitman, born of the artisan class in a region close to the largest and most corrupt centre of popula-

tion on his native continent, had a rather vagrant youth and manhood. At times he was a printer, at times a school-master, at times editor of stray country newspapers, and by and by he took up his father's trade of carpenter and builder. Meanwhile he had rambled about the country and into Canada; but in general until past thirty years old, he was apt to be near the East River. The New York thus familiar to him was passing, in the last days of the Knickerbocker School, into its metropolitan existence. The first edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* appeared in 1855, the year which produced the *Knickerbocker Gallery*.

During the Civil War he served devotedly as an army nurse. After the war, until 1873, he held some small Government clerkships at Washington. In 1873 a paralytic stroke brought his active life to an end; for his last twenty years he lived an invalid at Camden, New Jersey.

Until 1855, when the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* appeared in a thin folio, some of which he set up with his own hands, Whitman had not declared himself as a man of letters. From that time to the end he was constantly publishing verse, which from time to time he collected in increasing bulk under the old title. He published, too, some stray volumes of prose,—*Democratic Vistas* (1871), *Specimen Days and Collect* (1882–83), and the like. Prose and poetry alike seem full of a conviction that he had a mission to express and to extend the spirit of democracy, which he believed characteristic of his country. Few men have ever cherished a purpose more literally popular. Yet it is doubtful whether any man of letters in this country ever appealed less to the masses.

Writings.

Beyond question Whitman had remarkable individuality

and power. Equally beyond question he was among the most eccentric individuals who ever put pen to paper. The natural result of this has been that his admirers have admired him intensely; while whoever has found his work repellent has found it irritating. Particularly abroad, however, he has attracted much critical attention; and many critics have been disposed to maintain that his formless prophecies of democracy are deeply characteristic of America. The United States, they point out, are professedly the most democratic country in the world; Whitman is professedly the most democratic of American writers; consequently he must be the most typical.

Walt Whitman

The abstract ideal of democracy has never been better summed up than in the well-known watchwords of republican France: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. In the progress of American democracy, however, one of these ideals has been more strenuously kept in mind than the other two. Practical democracy in America has been chiefly inspired by the ideal of liberty. The theoretical democracy prevalent in Europe, on the other hand, has tended rather to emphasize the ideal of fraternity, and, still more, the principle of human equality. And this ideal of equality, carried to logical extreme, asserts all superiority, all excellence, to be a phase of evil.

Democracy.

Now, Walt Whitman's gospel of democracy certainly included liberty and laid strong emphasis on fraternity.

The ideal which most appealed to him, however, was that of equality. Though he would hardly have assented to such orthodox terms, his creed seems to have been that, as God made everything, one thing is just as good as another. This dogma of equality clearly involves a trait which has not yet been generally characteristic of American thought or letters,—a complete confusion of values. In the early days of Renaissance in New England, to be sure, Emerson and the rest, dazzled by the splendors of a new world of art and literature, made small distinction between those aspects of it which are excellent and those which are only stimulating. At the same time they adhered as firmly as the Puritans themselves to the ideal of excellence; and among the things with which they were really familiar they pretty shrewdly distinguished those which were most valuable, either on earth or in heaven. With Walt Whitman, on the other hand, everything is confused.

Confusion of Values.

Take, for example, a passage from his "Song of Myself," which contains some of his best-known phrases:

"A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

"I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

"Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say *Whose?*

"Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of vegetation.

"Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones.
Growing among black folds as among white,
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same,
I receive them the same.

"And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

"Tenderly will I use you, curling grass,
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,
It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon
out of their mothers' laps,
And here you are the mothers' laps.

"The grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths."

Here is perhaps his best-known phrase, "the beautiful uncut hair of graves." Here are other good phrases, like "the faint red roofs of mouths." Here, too, is undoubtedly tender feeling. Here, into the bargain, is such rubbish as "I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord," and such jargon as "Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff." In America this literary anarchy, this complete confusion of values, is especially eccentric; for America has generally displayed an instinctive sense of what things are worth. One begins to see why Whitman has been so much more eagerly welcomed abroad than at home. His conception of equality, utterly ignoring values, is not that of American democracy, but rather that of European. His democracy, in short, is the least native which has ever found voice in our country. One deep grace of American democracy has been a tacit recognition that excellence is admirable.

A Quality not American.

Sometimes, of course, he was more articulate. The Civil War stirred him to his depths; and he drew from it such noble verses as "My Captain," his poem on the death of Lincoln, or such little pictures as "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors." Even in bits like these, however, which come so much nearer form than is usual with Whitman, one feels his perverse rudeness of style. Such eccentricity of manner is bound to affect different people in different ways. One kind of reader, naturally eager for individuality and fresh glimpses of truth, is disposed to identify oddity and originality. Another kind of reader instinctively distrusts literary eccentricity. In both of these opinions there is an element of truth. Some writers of great power prove naturally unable to express themselves properly. There have been great men, and there will be more, whom fate compels either to express themselves uncouthly or else to stay dumb. The critical temper which would hold them perverse, instead of unfortunate, is mistaken. On the other hand, that different critical temper which would welcome their perversities as newly revealed evidences of genius is quite as mistaken in another way. Oddity is no part of solid artistic development; however beautiful or impressive, it is rather an excrescent outgrowth, bound to sap life from a parent stock which without it might grow more loftily and strongly.

Eccentricity of Manner.

Walt Whitman's style is of this excrescent kind; it is something which nobody else can imitate with impunity. That it was inevitable you will feel if you compare "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors" or "My Captain" with the unchecked perversities of his verse in general. The "Song of Myself," which we may take as generally representative of his work, is so recklessly misshapen that you

cannot tell whether its author was able to write in technical form. When you find him, however, as in those lesser pieces, attempting to do so, you at once feel that his eccentricity is a misfortune, for which he is no more to blame than a deaf and dumb man is for expressing emotion by inarticulate cries. The alternative would have been silence; and Whitman was enough of a poet to make one glad that he never dreamed of that.

In this decadent eccentricity of Whitman's style there is again something foreign to the spirit of this country. American men of letters have generally had deep artistic conscience. Now and again, to be sure, they have chosen to express themselves in what at first seems to be quite another manner. They have tried, for example, to reproduce the native dialects of the American people. As we remarked of the *Biglow Papers*, however, this "dialect" literature of America often reveals on analysis an artistic conscience as fine as Irving's, or Poe's, or Hawthorne's. The vagaries of Walt Whitman, on the other hand, seem utterly remote from literary conscience. Whitman's style, in short, is as little characteristic of America as his temper is of traditional American democracy. In America his oddities were more eccentric than they would have been anywhere else.

His Best Quality.

On the other hand, there is an aspect in which Whitman seems not only native but even promising. His life fell in chaotic times, when our past had faded and our future had not yet sprung into being. Bewildering confusion, fused by the accident of his lifetime into the seeming unity of a momentary whole, was the only aspect of human existence which could be afforded him by the native country which he so truly loved. For want of other surroundings

he was content to seek the meaning of life amid New York slums and dingy suburban country, in the crossing of the Brooklyn ferry, or in the hospitals of the Civil War. His lifelong eagerness to find in life the stuff of which poetry is made has brought him, after all, the reward he would most have cared for. In one aspect he is thoroughly American. The spirit of his work is that of world-old anarchy; his style has all the perverse oddity of paralytic decadence; but the substance of which his poems are made—their imagery as distinguished from their form or their spirit—comes wholly from his native country. In this aspect, then, though probably in no other, he may, after all, throw light on the future of literature in America.

III

LATER NEW ENGLAND

References

Works: Dr. Hale's works have been collected in a uniform edition, 10 vols., Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1898–1901. Colonel Higginson's works are similarly collected in 7 vols., Boston: Houghton, 1900. Bishop Brooks's works are published by E. P. Dutton & Co.; Emily Dickinson's and Miss Alcott's, by Roberts Brothers; Miss Jewett's, Celia Thaxter's, Sill's, Aldrich's, Fiske's, and Winsor's, by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Mary Wilkins's, by the Harpers.

Biography, Criticism, and Bibliography: For biographies, see the dictionaries of American biography; for criticism, the reviews and magazine articles indicated in Poole's *Index;* for lists of titles, with dates, see Foley or Whitcomb.

Selections: Stedman and Hutchinson (see index in Vol. XI).

Before passing on to those parts of America to which we have not yet turned—the South and the West—we must glance at what has occurred in New England since its Renaissance. There is no better way of beginning than to recall the men who were living at Boston in 1857, the year with which our consideration of modern New York began. Everett, Ticknor, Prescott, Motley, Parkman, Emerson, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Hawthorne were all alive, and many of them at the height of their powers. We need go no farther. Try to name the men of letters living in Boston to-day whose reputation is surely more than local, and you will discover at once that the present is a period of decline.

Though this decline cannot yet be thoroughly accounted for, two or three facts about it are obvious. For one thing, as we have already seen, the intellectual Renaissance of New England coincided with its period of commercial prosperity, which began with foreign commerce, and soon passed into local manufactures and local railways.

The Decline of New England.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Boston was probably the most prosperous city in America. Throughout this period, however, the prosperity of Boston never crystallized in what nowadays would be considered large fortunes. The great West, meanwhile, was untamed prairie and wilderness.

The intellectual leadership of Boston may roughly be said to have lasted until the Civil War. That great national convulsion affected the Northern States somewhat as an electric current affects temporarily separate chemicals; it flashed the Union into new cohesion. The wildest imagination of 1860 could hardly have conceived such centralized national power as in 1900 had become commonplace to American thought. One price which every separate region must pay for such national union is a decline of local importance.

Its External Causes.

Again, a few years after the Civil War the Pacific Railway was at last completed. Long before this our foreign commerce had disappeared. The opening of the continental transportation lines naturally stimulated that already great development of wheat-growing and the like which now makes our Western prairies perhaps the chief grain-producing region of the world. Coal, and oil, too, and copper, and iron began to sprout like weeds. The centre of economic importance in America inevitably shifted westward. Meantime, New England had lost

that mercantile marine which might conceivably have maintained its importance in international trade.

Again still, the immense development of Western wealth since 1860 has resulted in enormous private fortunes. Though the fortunes of wealthy New Englanders have undoubtedly increased, they have not increased in like proportion with the fortunes of the West. Such a state of economic fact could not fail, at least for a while, to bring about a marked change in American ideals. The immigrant clergy of New England held such local power as involves personal eminence; such power later passed into the hands of the bar; and during the Renaissance of New England, literature itself had influence enough to make personal eminence its most stimulating prize. To-day, for better or worse, power and eminence throughout America have momentarily become questions rather of enterprising wealth.

An Internal Cause.

These external causes would perhaps have brought to an end the leadership of New England; but we can see now as well that in the form which its Renaissance took, there was something which could not last long. As we look back on that period now, its most characteristic phase appears to have been that which began with Unitarianism, passed into Transcendentalism, and broke out into militant reform. These movements were all based on the fundamental conception that human beings are inherently good. This naturally involved the right of every individual to think and to act as he chose. Free exercise of this right for a while seemed to uphold the buoyant philosophy which asserted it. So long as human beings were controlled by the discipline of tradition, their vagaries were not so wild as to seem disintegrating. As the years went

on, however, this tendency inevitably led to excessive individualism. So in recent times the writers of New England have tended to seem rather solitary individuals than contemporary members of a friendly or contentious school of letters.

Among them, or rather apart from the rest, in the ripeness of an age which has come so gently that it hardly seems age at all, are three who in years belong to the older period.

Mrs. Howe.

Mrs. JULIA WARD HOWE (1819–), though born and educated in New York, has lived in Boston ever since her marriage in 1843 to Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, whose work in alleviating the misfortunes of the blind accomplished so much as almost to obscure his equally enthusiastic work in the cause of liberty—first in Greece, later in the antislavery movement of New England. Mrs. Howe shared in the philanthropic impulses of her husband; she has been a constant and eager supporter of various reforms; and is now among the principal advocates of suffrage for women. A public speaker of aptitude and skill, she has published less than she has uttered; but her "Battle Hymn of the Republic," beginning with that thrilling line,

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,"

seems the supreme expression of the devoted spirit which animated the best antislavery enthusiasm. For along with its fervid sincerity and its noble simplicity—traits which might be paralleled in Whittier—it has that indefinable power of appeal to popular feeling which has made its opening words part of the idiom of our nation. Besides

this lyric, the portion of Mrs. Howe's writing which now seems most significant is that which records her vivid reminiscences of the times through which she has lived and worked.

Higginson.

Something like this seems true of Colonel THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON (1823–), who has devoted himself with equal constancy and enthusiasm to similar principles of reform. Born at Cambridge, he graduated from Harvard College and from the Harvard Divinity School, and was for some years a Liberal minister. He was conspicuous in the antislavery movement, and in 1862 he was given command of the first regiment recruited from contraband slaves. He served until 1864, when he was compelled to leave the service by a wound. Ever since that time he has been an industrious and prolific writer, and an eager advocate of reform, particularly in the matter of suffrage for women. Colonel Higginson is remarkable not only for courteous bravery and devotion to his ideals, but for kindly tolerance of opinions honestly at variance with his own. His writings range from poems and stories and faithful criticisms to authoritative works of biography and history. But it now seems that none of them are at once more delightful and significant than his *Cheerful Yesterdays* (1898), his *Contemporaries* (1899), and the other reminiscences in which he has preserved vivid pictures of the older time which he knew so thoroughly.

Dr. Hale.

Less radical in his sympathies, but no less philanthropic, is Dr. EDWARD EVERETT HALE (1822–). A nephew of Edward Everett, and son of an eminent journalist, he graduated from Harvard, and became a Unitarian minister. Throughout his pastoral career he has been not only a distinguished preacher, but a copious writer, often an

active journalist, and a constant promoter of good works. He is now (1904) Chaplain of the Senate of the United States. His writings range as widely as those of Colonel Higginson. Among them his short story, *The Man Without a Country* (1863), stands out as probably the most popular expression in our literature of the Union sentiment during the Civil War—just as Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn" is the most popular expression of antislavery fervor at the same time. Aside from this, the portions of Dr. Hale's copious work to which one is most apt to turn are those, like his *New England Boyhood* (1893), which deal with the elder New England of which he himself was no little part.

Reminiscent Tendency.

Our three survivors of the Renaissance in New England thus seem particularly memorable for reminiscences, written in the declining days of Boston, of more active times. What makes these reminiscences at once characteristic and stimulating is that none of the three has ever so lost heart as for a moment to feel that we are yet fallen on evil times. All three have seen reforms dear to them struggle and prevail. In all three faith and hope are as strong as ever, and charity is strengthening with the quiet vigor of years. Yet it is hard to avoid the thought that there is more than accidental significance in the fact that so much of their later work deals rather with the past than with the future.

All three can vividly remember the times when the oratory of New England was at its best, and the scholarly history, and the philosophy, and the literature. Our business now is to inquire what has happened, since the time of Hawthorne, to these four phases of expression which were so vital in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Oratory seems extinct. Throughout the country, indeed, the press has steadily tended to supplant the platform; and it is hardly invidious to say that there is no newspaper in New England which carries anything like such influence as the orators exerted there in their palmy days. Even the pulpit has distinctly declined. Since the untimely death of the late Bishop of Massachusetts, PHILLIPS BROOKS (1835–1893), who was everywhere recognized as a great preacher, there has been no divine in New England whose utterances could certainly command more than local attention.

Bishop Brooks

With history the case is different. The earlier type of historians, who seemed as much men of letters as men of learning, came to an end with Parkman. Later historical activity has seemed a matter rather of science than of literature; but it has been considerable. State historical societies and local antiquarians and genealogists have been making more and more accessible, often in excellent editions, the copious records of colonial New England. Among more sustained historical works have been the learned co-operative histories edited by JUSTIN WINSOR (1831–1897), who was equally eminent as a scholar and as the librarian first of the Public Library of Boston and later of Harvard College. His chief original work is an exhaustive life of Christopher Columbus (1891). Somewhat more characteristic are his *Memorial History of Boston* (1880–1881) and his very elaborate *Narrative and Critical History of America* (1886–1889). In both of these he planned and supervised vast works, of which the separate chapters were written under his guidance, by expert authorities. The title of his second co-operative history is sufficient to remind us that historical activity in

History

Winsor

New England has by no means confined itself to local matters. In general, however, it has confined itself to matters American.

Henry Adams.

HENRY ADAMS (1838–), for example, a son of the first Charles Francis Adams, and a grandson and a great-grandson of the two New England presidents of the United States, may fairly be counted a New Englander, though for many years he has lived in Washington. His *History of the United States*, from 1801 to 1817, which appeared between 1889 and 1891, combines accuracy of detail with grasp of his subject and scale of composition in a manner which fairly achieves, in dealing with a limited epoch, what Macaulay did not live to achieve when he tried to deal with two English centuries. His brothers, the second CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS (1833–) and BROOKS ADAMS (1848–), have published, and are still publishing, suggestive critical works on historical matters in general, mostly as they are related to the history of America.

C. F. Adams. Brooks Adams.

Rhodes.

JAMES FORD RHODES (1848–), a native of Ohio, who settled in Boston about 1895, is still engaged there on his *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*. This work, of which the first volume appeared in 1893, is remarkable for the judicial temper with which it sets forth, in excellent literary form, the events of a stirring period still within living memory. And JOHN CODMAN ROPES (1836–1899), an eminent member of the Boston bar, was everywhere recognized as an authority on military history. His chief books concern the campaigns of Napoleon and those of our own Civil War.

Ropes.

Excellent as the work of these historians has been, often in form as well as in substance, it has not had quite the sort of literary charm which made their more romantic

predecessors widely popular. Something of such popular quality, without the misleading glamor of romance, pervaded the historical work of JOHN FISKE (1842–1901), who devoted his last fifteen years chiefly to the writing of a series of books on American history. Taken together, these cover the subject cursorily yet with a pervasive understanding of its significance in modern philosophic thought, from the discovery of America until after the Revolution. Fiske, who graduated from Harvard in 1863, was a voracious reader with a marvellous memory, with remarkable power of perceiving the relations between apparently diverse phases of his information, and with unfailing command of lucid and fluent style. His slight lack of originality prevented him from vagary, and made him a safe guide for those general readers who in recent years have been attracted to history as a matter not of romance but of philosophy. **Fiske.**

For Fiske, before turning to history, had been known as a popular writer of philosophy. His *Cosmic Philosophy* (1874) is an admirably compact and lucid statement of the by no means compact or lucid tenets of Herbert Spencer; and Fiske went on, with due respect for the principles of evolution, to set forth in various works the new light which he conceived these principles to throw on the world-old questions of God, of eternity, and of human destiny. **Philosophy.**

In this extreme recoil from the metaphysical abstractions of Transcendentalism, the whole tendency of New England philosophy, so far as it has reached the stage of popular publication, is typified. New England still loves general principles, but it no longer trusts those principles unless it can be comfortably assured that they are not belied by

ascertained fact. The most recent popular philosopher exemplifies this tendency. WILLIAM JAMES (1842–), whose father, the elder Henry James (1811–1882), was a searcher for truth of the earlier type, has been for many years, after a medical education, Professor of Psychology at Harvard. His *Principles of Psychology* (1890) and his Gifford lectures, the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, delivered at Edinburgh in 1902, have given him international reputation.

William James.

William James is not alone among Harvard philosophers either in publication or in international recognition. His colleague, JOSIAH ROYCE (1855–), has also been a Gifford lecturer; and his works on metaphysics combine extraordinary power of stating the tenets of past thinkers with a strength of philosophic imagination which bids fair to make him one with whom future thinkers must reckon. Another colleague, GEORGE HERBERT PALMER (1842–), has published helpful comments on the conduct of life; and some admirable translations from the Greek. Another still, far younger, GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863–), has published some noteworthy books of æsthetics, and two or three volumes of poetry which no lover of poetry should neglect. As popular philosophers, however, these men have not appealed to so wide a public as their more obviously scientific contemporaries, Fiske and James.

Royce.

Palmer.

Santayana.

Nor have the other than philosophic writers now or lately connected with Harvard proved widely popular. No student of English literature, to be sure, can ever neglect the work of FRANCIS JAMES CHILD (1825–1896), whose final collection of English and Scottish popular ballads is a model of sympathetic learning. Nor can any

Professor Child.

consideration of New England during the years we now have in mind neglect the gracious figure of CHARLES ELIOT NORTON (1827–), in whose person and whose utterances Harvard students of the last quarter of the nineteenth century found embodied their ideal of culture and of bravery. It has not been Professor Norton's fortune to sympathize with the tendencies of the age amid which he has faithfully maintained the ideals from which he has never swerved. And the spirit of his gentle but unfaltering assertion of what he believes the truth has taught his pupils a lesson the deeper and the more lasting from the fact that many of them could not accept the letter of his teachings. Professor Norton.

Something of the same moral quality has appeared in the work of the man who throughout Professor Norton's academic career has been President of Harvard College. And it is pleasant to think that this touch of community between men who seem in many ways so different may be partly due to the fact that CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT (1834–) is Professor Norton's cousin, that both are sprung from families and from traditions eminent and honorable in old New England. The sympathies of Professor Norton have tended to emphasize the ideals of the past. Those of President Eliot have tended, amid what most men would have found disheartening lack of sympathy, to dwell on the hopes which he has never ceased to discern in the future. His influence on the conduct of education in America is at last recognized as the most potent of his time, if not indeed in all our national history. If his principles may be summarized, they may perhaps be stated thus: The surest hope of democracy lies in a diffusion of education which shall admit to the highest available training every human being President Eliot.

who is capable of benefiting by it. Accordingly, every merely technical obstacle which may interpose itself between the most remote primary school in the Western wilderness and the full privileges of our universities must, if possible, be removed. And yet, all the while, the standard of the higher education must be maintained. So all his life his task has been at once to destroy needless barriers and to uphold those which are needful.

Harvard.

It may appear that we have dwelt too long on Harvard; but Harvard remains the chief intellectual centre of that part of New England from which the literature of our Renaissance sprang. It was at Harvard, on the whole, that the elder school of New England letters was nurtured. Harvard men edited the old *North American Review*. Through Fields's time the influence of Harvard traditions was paramount in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Emerson was a Harvard man; Longfellow and Lowell were Harvard professors. And so on. The contrast between the elder Harvard and the new becomes apparent. Since the days of the Renaissance, which we considered by themselves, Harvard, for all its incessant activities, has been of no great literary importance. It has tended to an intellectual isolation from which the separate men who have addressed the public have addressed them each separately and in his own way; and among all these men on whom we have touched, only one has attempted a contribution to pure literature. This is Professor Santayana, in his two or three volumes of poetry.

Poetry.

Throughout the period which we now have in mind, the production of poetry in New England has been copious. A good deal of this verse has been of more than respectable quality; but so little of it has emerged into distinct excel-

lence that, if anyone were asked to name the poets of New England in recent times he might find himself at fault. He might perhaps recall the pleasant memory of CELIA THAXTER (1836–1894), who passed most of her busy, brave, useful life at the Isle of Shoals, where she was born and died, and whose verses, together with one or two volumes of prose, delightfully record the temper with which such humanity as hers could surpass what to most human beings would have been the benumbing limits of isolation. He might recall, too, as of New England origin, the less distinct figure of EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841–1887), whose few, but admirable, poems bespeak the isolation of a Transcendentalist born too late. He would probably recall the hauntingly mournful isolation phrased in the still more solitary poems of EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886), whose mood laments a vanished past almost as palpably as the mood of Transcendentalism welcomed an unfathomed future. But almost the only figure which would define itself with certainty would be that of THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836–). Aldrich.

Aldrich, like Fields before him, passed most of his youth in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Then, for a while, he was engaged first in business, and later in journalism at New York. He did not settle in Boston until he was nearly thirty years old; but as he has lived there ever since, he has long been recognized as the chief surviving man of letters there resident. The circumstances of his earlier years, however, have naturally precluded him from immediate inheritance of local traditions. And his exquisitely finished verse—never copious, but never free from a loving care for every detail which makes it seem better each time

you read it—accordingly appears almost as independent of local influences as was the verse of Poe in the New York of the '40s.

With Aldrich's prose work the case has been different. His *Story of a Bad Boy* (1870) records boy life in the dying New Hampshire seaport as vividly as Lucy Larcom's *New England Girlhood* (1889) records her memories of Massachusetts in the '30s. And although Aldrich's other stories, and the like, have less New England flavor, there is not a little of it in many of them; nor is there any of them which we cannot turn to with certainty of such satisfaction as should come from works of conscientious art. None the less, the fact that Howells, an Ohio man, was succeeded in control of the *Atlantic Monthly* by Aldrich, whose early years were passed in New Hampshire, New Orleans, and New York, is a fact which both typifies and explains the manner in which the older literary traditions of New England have been disintegrating.

Fiction.

Of the writers of fiction who have flourished there meanwhile, the most popular have been women. The *Little Women* (1867) of LOUISA MAY ALCOTT (1832–1888) is a story of New England girlhood as vivid and as true as were Jacob Abbott's "Rollo" tales of New England childhood a generation before. The earlier stories of Miss MARY WILKINS (1862–) portray with touching pathos and humor the decline of the New England country, as the period with which we are now concerned came upon it. And the stories of Miss SARAH ORNE JEWETT (1849–) are equally true to the pathos of this declining New England, and at the same time almost as exquisite in finish as are the stories in general of Aldrich. Meanwhile, Mrs. MARGARET DELAND (1857–), a Pennsylvanian, whose married life has been

passed in Boston, has written, after one or two volumes of delicate poetry, a number of stories which deal, uncompromisingly yet tenderly, with various religious and social questions such as the conditions of modern life are bound everywhere to raise.

There are men in Boston the while who have written fiction, and written it well. Even so cursory a glance as ours cannot fairly neglect the names of Arlo Bates (1850–), poet, novelist, and faithful teacher of literature; of Thomas Russell Sullivan (1849–), whose stories vie with Aldrich's in delicacy of finish, and more than vie with them in significance; and of Frederic Jesup Stimson (1855–), a lawyer and a publicist, whose occasional contributions to literature have indicated extraordinary range and power. And perhaps the chief work of fiction which has proceeded from New England since the elder days is the *Unleavened Bread* (1902) of Robert Grant (1852–), whose copious earlier work, produced amid the duties of a busy legal and judicial career, is obscured chiefly by the exceptional strength of this unflinching study of the mischief a bad woman can do, when she has no idea that she is bad.

Summary. But, when all is said and done, these New England writers of the present day form no school, like the school which reached its maturity under the influence of the New England Renaissance. We have touched incidentally on a number of names. The list is by no means exhaustive; yet it is doubtful whether the names which we have chanced to neglect would have added any definitely new features to the picture we have tried to discern in outline. The work of modern New England is faithful, and technically skilful. It is not animated by any general purpose, and the fact

that so much of it tends in substance to be reminiscent indicates that, on the whole, it is hardly national in range. It is too close to us for more certain generalization.

One thing, however, must long have been evident. So far we have altogether neglected three novelists of more eminence than any whom we have mentioned. These are Howells, James, and Crawford. The reason why we have neglected them is that they seem important enough for separate consideration.

IV

THE NOVEL: HOWELLS, JAMES, AND CRAWFORD

References

Works: The works of Howells are published by the Harpers; those of Crawford, by Macmillan. The earlier works of James were mostly published by Osgood and by Ticknor and Fields, Boston; the later ones are from various publishers. For lists of titles, see Foley.

Biography and Criticism: For biographies, see any good dictionary of American biography; for criticism, consult Poole's *Index* for references to various reviews and critical notes. Particularly to be noted is Howells's article on James in *The Century* for November, 1882.

Selections: For Howells, Stedman, and Hutchinson, IX, 479–505; James, *ibid.*, X, 179–197; Crawford, *ibid.*, XI, 143–153.

Both in New York and in New England the most popular form of recent literature has probably been the short story. From influences in a way common to both regions, combined with influences quite distinct, there have emerged meanwhile the three American novelists who have attained such eminence as to demand separate consideration. One—Howells—is completely American; the other two—James and Crawford—are Americans whose principal work has been deeply affected by European environment. It is worth our while to consider them in turn.

Howells.

William Dean Howells (1837–) was born in Ohio, where he tried journalism and meanwhile wrote verse. He early came to New England and met Longfellow, Lowell, and the other chief figures of our New England Renaissance. In 1860 he wrote a campaign life of Lincoln.

Between 1861 and 1865 he was our consul at Venice. In 1872 he succeeded Fields as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. For some years he lived in or near Boston. For the past ten or twelve years he has lived in New York. There, particularly in the "Easy Chair" of *Harper's Monthly*, he has probably had as marked an influence upon fellow writers as upon the public, who know him better through his books.

These books are, broadly speaking, essays, farces, and novels. The essays have sometimes been reminiscent of Ohio or early New England, sometimes finely appreciative of literature. The farces, slight as such things must be, have shown brilliancy of dialogue and persistent reality of characterization. This last quality appears even more conspicuously in the most important work of Howells—his novels. As early as 1871 he wrote *Their Wedding Journey;* since then he has published some forty novels, of which *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) is perhaps the best. All are patient, insistent, yet often brilliant studies of average men and women.

Howells has written so much, so faithfully, and in a spirit at once so earnestly American and so kindly, that it is hard to say why he has not achieved more certainly powerful results. His chief limitation seems to be a kind of lifelong diffidence, which has forbidden a feeling of intimate familiarity even with the scenes and the people of his own creation. This is perhaps due to the circumstances of his life. An Ohio boy, he was of course a foreigner in Italy; and during his long and welcome residence near Boston he never seems to have felt quite at home. His pleasant reminiscences of his friendships with the eminent literary men of the past show implicitly the sentiments rather of

Diffidence.

a pilgrim than of a fellow. And the vivid creatures of his imagination are after all seen externally. He never quite sympathizes with them; he never seems quite to understand them. In brief, his novels rather indicate, with tireless energy, the material of which literature might be made than mould that material into final form. With all his limitations, nevertheless, he is surely the most noteworthy American novelist of the years through which he is still happily living.

Henry James.

For it is not quite certain that HENRY JAMES (1843–) should be unreservedly called American. His earlier years were passed in America, partly in New York and partly in New England; his first novels concerned American life, and were published in Boston; but for more than twenty years he has lived abroad, mostly in England; and his later work is perhaps the most subtle study of English life, in its more complex aspects, that has ever been made. The so-called "international novel" is largely of his construction. *Roderick Hudson* (1875), that model short story *Daisy Miller* (1878), and the *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) are among his best-known works. He has also written a life of Hawthorne and several other volumes of very discerning criticism.

Temperamentally, James is completely an artist. From beginning to end, his effort has been to feel, as deeply as possible, the distinct character of any subject with which he has dealt; and to set it forth in the most delicate shades of its significance. The exquisite refinement of both his perception and his style has proved insidious. Year by year his work has grown more subtle, more difficult to understand without an intensity and persistence of attention which no man of letters may confidently

demand. Yet there can be no doubt that such persistent attention to the pages of James will never lack reward. Among contemporary English novelists, none is more masterly.

Crawford.

FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD (1854–) is less American still. Except for the fact that, though born in Italy, he is of American origin and has always been loyal to American tradition, he can hardly be called American at all. He began writing fiction only after prolonged study in various parts of the world. Of his fifty years, all but four or five, at intervals, have been passed abroad.

Without pretence to the first rank in literature, Crawford is a born story-teller. There is not one of his many volumes to which one cannot confidently turn for entertainment. And his intimate knowledge of modern Italy is said to give his stories of contemporary Italian life—such as *Saracinesca* (1887)—a value similar to that of Anthony Trollope's stories about Victorian England. Crawford lacks the pertinacity of observation which is among the chief merits of Howells; he is utterly without such subtlety as is at once the chief grace and the chief error of James. He is less important than either of them, but far more readable. And in spite of qualities which sometimes seem meretricious, he has a robust vigor of feeling and of manner which makes his work throughout inspiriting.

Summary.

Such are the three American novelists who, from among such influences as produced our elder literature, have surely achieved eminence. Clearly they are too diverse, and too near us, for generalization. We must turn now to regions of our country less remarkable in literary history than either New England or New York, but not to be neglected. And first to the South.

V

THE SOUTH

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SIMMS: *Novels*, 10 vols., New York: Armstrong, 1882; *Poems*, 2 vols., New York: Redfield, 1853. W. P. Trent's *William Gilmore Simms*, Boston: Houghton, 1892 (AML), has a good bibliography. For selections, see Duyckinck, II, 430–433; Griswold's *Poetry*, 345–348; Griswold's *Prose*, 505–517; Stedman, 106–107; Stedman and Hutchinson, VI, 270–277.

HAYNE: *Poems*, Boston: Lothrop, 1882. See Sidney Lanier's "Paul H. Hayne's Poetry" in *Music and Poetry*, New York: Scribner, 1898, pp. 197–211. There are selections from Hayne in Stedman and Hutchinson, VIII, 461–466.

TIMROD: Timrod's Works (Memorial Edition), Boston: Houghton, 1899, contains a memoir. For selections, see Stedman and Hutchinson, VIII, 408–411.

LANIER: *Works*, New York: Scribner (uniform, but no collected edition); for a list of titles, see Foley, 165–166. To the edition of Lanier's poems, edited by his wife (New York: Scribner, 1884), W. H. Ward contributed a biography. There are selections in Stedman and Hutchinson, X, 145–151.

For biographies of later Southern writers, whose works are easily accessible, see any good dictionary of American biography; for criticism upon them, see the magazine articles and reviews which can readily be found by means of Poole's *Index*.

THE Middle States and New England, after certain literary achievements, seem now in a stage either of decline

or at best of preparation for some literature of the future. The other parts of the country, at which we have now to glance, need not detain us long. However copious their production, it has not yet afforded us much of permanent value.

Up to the Civil War the South had produced hardly any writing which expressed more than a sense that standard models are excellent. For this comparative literary lifelessness there is obvious historical reason. The difference between the Southern climate and the Northern has often been dwelt on; so has the difference between the social systems of the two parts of the country. It has often been remarked, too, that the oligarchic system of the South developed powerful politicians. At the time of the Revolution, for example, our most eminent statesmen were from Virginia; and when the Civil War came, though the economic superiority of the North was bound to win, the political superiority of the South seemed generally evident. One plain cause of these facts has not been much emphasized.

Conditions of Life.

From the beginning, the North was politically free and essentially democratic; its social distinctions were nothing like so rigid as those which have generally diversified civilized society. There was no mob; the lower class of New England produced Whittier. In a decent Yankee village, to this day, you need not lock your doors at night; and when crime turns up in the North, as it does with increasing frequency, you can still trust the police to attend to it. In the South, at least from the moment when slavery established itself, a totally different state of affairs prevailed. The African slaves, constantly increasing in number, seemed the most dangerous lower class which had ever

faced an English-speaking government. The agricultural conditions of Southern life meanwhile prevented population from gathering in large centres. As slavery developed, the South accordingly grew to be a region where a comparatively small governing class, the greater part of whom lived separately on large country places, felt themselves compelled, by the risk of servile insurrection, to devote their political energies to the rigid maintenance of established order. Whether slavery was really so dangerous as people thought may be debatable; there can be no question that people living in such circumstances could hardly help believing it so. Surrounded by an increasing servile population of aliens, the ruling classes of our elder South dreaded political experiment to a degree almost incomprehensible in the North. More and more, consequently, the ablest men of the South tended to concentrate their energies on politics, and in politics to develop increasingly conservative temper.

Conservatism.

The natural result was such as conservatism would produce anywhere. Up to the time of the Civil War a normal Southerner was far less changed from his emigrant ancestor than was any New England Yankee. As in the development of national character the North lagged behind England, so the South lagged behind the North. Long ago we saw how our first great civil war—the American Revolution—sprang from mutual misunderstandings, involved in the different rates of development of England and her American colonies. Something of the same kind, we can see now, underlay the Civil War which once threatened the future of the American Union.

Of course the South was never destitute of powerful or of cultivated minds; and from the beginning there were

Southern books. A rather fantastic habit includes among these the voyages of Captain John Smith and the Elizabethan translation of Ovid by George Sandys, a portion of which was made on the banks of the James River; and there are various old historical writings from the South. The best of these seem the posthumously published manuscripts of WILLIAM BYRD (1664–1744), of Westover, Virginia, whose style is very like that of his contemporary Englishmen of quality. In the fact that Byrd's records of contemporary history were written for his private pleasure by a great landed proprietor, and that they saw the light only when he had been nearly a century in his grave, there is something characteristic of the South. Southern gentlemen of an intellectual turn collected considerable libraries; but these libraries, chiefly of serious standard literature, tended to become traditional repositories of culture. Southern taste commanded each generation to preserve its culture unaltered, much as political necessity compelled the South to keep unaltered its government and its society.

William Byrd, of Westover.

At the time of the Revolution, of course, the development of political intelligence in the South produced powerful political writing. The Declaration of Independence, which came straight from the pen of THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743–1826), is the masterpiece of a school in which Jefferson, though perhaps the principal figure, was by no means solitary. As in the North, too, this political writing tended during the first half of the nineteenth century to develop into rhetorical oratory; and though among American orators Webster and Everett and Choate and their New England contemporaries seem the best, no special study of American oratory can neglect such men

Political Writing.

as John Caldwell Calhoun (1782–1850), Robert Young Hayne (1791–1839), or Henry Clay (1777–1852). Oratory, however, is not pure letters, but rather a phase of public life; and our concern is chiefly with literature.

After Jefferson the chief Southerners who should be mentioned in literary history are the following: WILLIAM WIRT (1772–1834), a Virginia lawyer, for some years Attorney-General of the United States, whose elaborately rhetorical *Life of Patrick Henry* (1817) places its author among the more important American biographers; JOHN MARSHALL (1755–1835), the most eminent Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, also a Virginian, whose celebrated *Life of Washington* (1805) is perhaps the most distinguished American biography; EDWARD COATE PINCKNEY (1802–1828), a Maryland lawyer and professor, who published certain volumes of poetry which reveal a true lyric gift; WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806–1870); JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY (1795–1870); AUGUSTUS BALDWIN LONGSTREET (1790–1870); CHARLES ÉTIENNE ARTHUR GAYARRÉ (1805–1895); JOHN ESTEN COOKE (1830–1886); PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830–1886); HENRY TIMROD (1829–1867); and SIDNEY LANIER (1842–1881). Among notable Southern periodicals have been the *Southern Review*, which was published at Charleston in 1828 and had a short life; the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which was published in Richmond from 1835 to 1864 and was at one time edited by Poe; and the *Southern Quarterly Review*, which was established at Charleston in 1848, remained for several years under the editorship of Simms, and came to an end in 1856.

Periodicals.

Of these names the earlier clearly belong to the traditions of the eighteenth century. Several of the later are

Kennedy. already almost forgotten. Kennedy, a Maryland man eminent in political life, was the author of the novels *Swallow Barn* (1832), *Horse-Shoe Robinson* (1835), and

Long-street. others. Longstreet, a Georgia man, a graduate of Yale, a lawyer, a judge, a Methodist minister, and the president of two or three Southern colleges, contributed to various newspapers sketches of Southern life, which in 1840 were collected into a volume called *Georgia Scenes*. These are successful prototypes of the local short stories which during the past fifteen or twenty years have so generally appeared

Gayarré. in various parts of the country. Gayarré was a New Orleans lawyer. His works on the history of his native State, published between 1847 and 1854, and culminating in a three-volume *History of Louisiana* published in 1866, are respectable and authoritative local histories. Late in life he produced one or two novels and comedies,

Cooke. which were never widely read. Cooke, of Virginia, a lawyer and a Confederate soldier, devoted the chief activity of his mature years to literature. Besides lives of General Lee and Stonewall Jackson, he wrote certain romances connected with his native State before and after the Civil War.

It is hardly too much to say that if these sporadic writers had not been Southerners, they would have been even more forgotten than they are, along with the Northern Literati momentarily enshrined in 1846 by Edgar Allan Poe. There are only four Southern names which now seem of literary importance; and of these only one stands for considerable work before the Civil War.

Simms. This is WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS, who was born in Charleston, South Carolina, was apprenticed to an apothecary, and later began the study of law. At the

age of twenty-one he married, and a year later he published a volume of commonplace poetry. From that time until his death he produced no less than eighty-seven volumes.

The immense bulk of Simms's writings involved hasty and careless composition; and the romances, to which his popularity was chiefly due, are not only careless but obviously affected by both Cooper and Scott, not to speak of minor influences. In their day some of them were widely popular; at present even their names are almost forgotten. For all their careless haste, however, they indicate uncommon vigor of temperament, and amid the obvious conventions of their plots and characters they constantly reveal, like the earlier romances of Brockden Brown and of Cooper, a true sense of the background in which the scenes were laid.

Up to the time of the Civil War, beyond much question, Simms was by far the most considerable literary man whom the Southern States produced. In South Carolina he was long recognized as the principal figure of a literary epoch contemporary with that in which New England produced Emerson and Thoreau, and Whittier, and Longfellow, and Lowell, and Holmes, and Hawthorne. This collocation of names is enough. The chief Southern man of letters before the Civil War did vigorous, careless work of the sort which had produced more lasting monuments in the New York of Fenimore Cooper. Cooper's work, we have seen, was virtually complete in 1832; and Simms's did not begin until 1833. In literature, as in temper, the South lagged behind the North.

Hayne.

The next Southern writer who deserves attention is PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE, a nephew of that distinguished

South Carolina Senator whose speech on Nullification in 1830 elicited Webster's famous reply. Paul Hayne was born in this very year when his uncle and Webster were debating in the Senate. He studied for the bar, but devoted himself chiefly to literature at a time when the literary activity of Charleston was dominated by Simms. When the Civil War came he entered the Southern army; he broke down his health in the service. The war left him, too, ruined in property; but he survived, working hard at letters in the Georgia country, until 1886. Hayne eagerly strove to maintain the literary dignity of the native region which he passionately loved. A man of gentler origin than Simms, and better educated, he seems more in sympathy with the formal traditions of the South Carolina gentry. He shows, too, an academic sense of conventional standards. In this aspect Hayne had something in common with the New England poets. Certainly, compared with the best work of Timrod and of Sidney Lanier, his poetry seems deficient in individuality and passion; yet it reveals a touch of genuineness almost unknown in the South until the fatal days of secession.

Timrod.

In 1873 Hayne edited the poems of his friend, HENRY TIMROD. Timrod had in him the stuff of which poetry is made, and the circumstances of his career made some of his expression of it admirable. He was born in Charleston, the son of an artisan who was known as the Poet Mechanic. He studied for a while at the University of Georgia; he then turned to the law; and for some time before the Civil War he was a private tutor. During the war he was a journalist. At the burning of Columbia during Sherman's march to the sea his property was totally de-

stroyed; in 1867 his consequent poverty brought to an end a life which was never physically robust.

Among Timrod's poems, one, "The Cotton Boll," surpasses the rest. The eccentric irregularity of its labored verse cannot disguise its lyric note; and the sense of Nature which it reveals is as fine, as true, and as simple as that which makes so nearly excellent Whittier's poems about New England landscapes. The closing stanza of the poem reveals the anguish of the Civil War in lines of nobly sustained lyric fervor.

We can hardly read even short extracts from Timrod, however, without feeling, along with his lyric quality, a puzzling, inarticulate indistinctness. A similar trait appears in the work of the most memorable man of letters as yet produced by the South—SIDNEY LANIER (1842–1881). Born at Macon, Georgia, Lanier graduated from a Georgia college in 1860, and at the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted as a Confederate volunteer. Towards the close of the war he was taken prisoner; the physical hardships of his military experience produced a weakness of the lungs from which he never recovered. After the war he was for a while a school-teacher, and for a while a lawyer in Alabama and Georgia. In 1873 he removed to Baltimore, where at first he supported himself by playing the flute in a symphony orchestra. Soon, however, he became known as a man of letters; and in 1879, two years before his death, he was made a lecturer on English literature at Johns Hopkins University. Lanier.

A true lyric artist, Lanier was a skilful musician, and he wrote genuine poetry. The circumstances of his life, however, were such as to preclude a very high degree of technical training, and, at least until after the war had

broken his health, much systematic study. What he accomplished under these circumstances is astonishing. He was never popular, and probably never will be. His quality was too fine to appeal to the general public; his training was too imperfect to make his critical work or his theories of æsthetics seem important to technical scholars. He was compelled, besides, to write more than was good for him—at least one novel, for example, and versions for boys of much old romance, concerning King Arthur, and the heroes of Froissart, the Welsh tales of the *Mabinogion*, and Percy's *Reliques*. He wrote nothing more characteristic, however, than *The Science of English Verse* (1880), which comprises the substance of his first course of lectures at Johns Hopkins. To state his serious and earnest system of dogmatic poetics would take too long. In brief, he believed the function of poetry to be far nearer to that of music than it has generally been held. The emotional effect of poetry he declared to arise literally from its sound quite as much as from its meaning; and the poetry which he wrote was decidedly affected by this deliberate, sincere, but somewhat cramping theory.

Marshes of Glynn.

Lanier's lyric quality, as well as his self-imposed limitations, appear more clearly in his "Marshes of Glynn." Here his poetical impulse is expressed in a musical form which he might have called symphonic. He is no longer writing a song; he is working out a complicated motive, in a manner so entirely his own that the first thirty-six lines compose one intricate, incomprehensible sentence. The closing passage, easier to understand, possesses quite as much symphonic fervor. The poet has been gazing out over the marshes and trying to phrase the limitless emotion which arises as he contemplates a trackless plain

where land and sea interfuse. Then the tide begins to rise, and he goes on thus:

"Lo, out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-tide must be:
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate channels that flow
Here and there, Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost creeks and the low-lying lanes
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins
That like as with rosy and silvery essences flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the marsh-grass stir;
Passes a hurrying sound of wings that westward whir;
Passes, and all is still; and the currents cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

"How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

"And now from the Vast of the Lord will the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvellous marshes of Glynn."

Now this inarticulate verse is of a quality which can never be popular, and perhaps indeed is so eccentric that one should be prudent in choosing adjectives to praise

it. The more you read the "Marshes of Glynn," however, and the more, indeed, you read any of Lanier's poetry, the more certain you feel that he was among the truest men of letters whom our country has produced. Genuine in impulse, fervid in temper, impressed but not overwhelmed by the sad and tragic conditions of his life, and sincerely moved to write beautifully, he exhibits lyric power hardly to be found in any other American.

All this, however, seems hardly national. Lanier's career was wholly American, and almost wholly Southern; the emotional temper with which he was filled must have been quickened by experience only in our own country. The things with which he chose to deal, however, might have come to him anywhere. The very fact which keeps him permanently from popularity is perhaps this lack of local perception, as distinguished from a temper which could not help being of local origin. So if Lanier's work tells us anything about Southern literature, it only tells us, a little more surely than that of Hayne, or of Timrod, how the tragic convulsion of our Civil War waked in the South a kind of passion which America had hardly exhibited before.

Contemporary Southern Writers.

Since the Civil War, such literature as has come from the South has been chiefly in the form of novels and short stories. These, usually published in the Northern magazines, have faithfully and sympathetically reproduced Southern scenery and dialect. They have distinguished themselves from other local stories by a greater courtliness and pathos of mood, combined with skill and conscientiousness in the matter of style. In this manner THOMAS NELSON PAGE (1853–) has written of Virginia; CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK (1850–) of the Tennessee moun-

taineers; JAMES LANE ALLEN (1849–) of Kentucky; GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE (1844–) of the Creoles of Louisiana; and JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848–), whose stories of "Uncle Remus" (1880, 1884) are nowadays probably almost as familiar as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, has vividly depicted the negroes of Georgia.

We are thus compelled to feel that our Southern regions have as yet produced little if any more significant literature than the North had produced before 1832. Since the Civil War the social and economic condition of the South has been too disturbed for final expression. As yet, therefore, the South presents little to vary the general outlines of literature in America. The few Southern poets, however, who have phrased the emotion aroused by the Civil War which swept their earlier civilization out of existence, reveal a lyric fervor hardly yet equalled in the North. As one thinks of these poets, of Hayne, of Timrod, and of Lanier, one begins to wonder whether they may not perhaps forerun a spirit which shall give a new beauty and power to American letters in the future.

Summary.

VI

THE WEST

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General Conditions.

A HUNDRED years ago the greater part of our country was still a wilderness. To-day, it is said, almost every available acre throughout the United States is in private ownership; and regions which within living memory were still unbroken prairie are the sites of cities more populous than New York or Boston was fifty years ago.

From influences quite beyond human control, the energies of Western people have accordingly devoted themselves to the conquest of Nature on a scale hitherto unattempted. No wonder the most salient trait of our great confused West seems enthusiasm for material prosperity as distinguished from spiritual or intellectual ideals. Yet there are such things as Western ideals, different from the older ideals of New England, but not for that less admirable. Not only have these ideals existed, but occasionally, as in the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, they have revealed themselves in forms so admirable as to make the West seem a region from which in time to come we may hope for superbly imaginative expression.

As yet, however, the West has not developed any such unity of character as has marked our elder regions. So far as Western character has found expression in serious literature, this has consisted chiefly of short stories which set forth the local characteristics of various Western regions. In general, the energy of Western literature is still confined to popular journalism. Mainly from this source, the comic columns of Western newspapers, there has developed a kind of native expression hardly recognized forty years ago, and now popularly supposed to be our most characteristic. This is what is commonly called American humor.

American Humor.

The chief trait of American humor we have already found to be a grave confusion of fact and nonsense like that with which Franklin records the "grand leap of the whale . . . up the Falls of Niagara." In like manner, we have observed, Irving, Lowell, and Holmes are apt to mingle sober truth with wild extravagance. All these men of letters, however, humorists though they were,

possessed such sense of personal dignity and such literary accomplishment as to impress on early American humor a distinction of style, and to animate it with a mood which is usually serious and often noble.

The form which American humor has been developing in Western newspapers has other traits. The chief of these, which is inherent in the popularity of Western journalism, is hard to define, but palpable and vital. It amounts to a general assumption that everybody whom you address will entirely understand whatever you say. A familiar example of this temper pervaded a kind of entertainment frequent in America thirty or forty years ago—the negro minstrel shows. In these a number of men would daub their faces with burnt cork, and sitting in a row would sing songs and tell stories. Underlying both songs and stories was an assumption that everybody who heard what the performers said was familiar with everything they knew—not only with human nature and local allusions, but also with the very names and personal oddities of the individuals they mentioned. To phrase the thing colloquially, the whole performance assumed that we were all in the crowd. This trait pervades the "funny" columns of American newspapers, particularly in the West; and it is mostly from these columns that recent American humor has emerged into what approach it has made to literary form.

John Phœnix.

At least three familiar humorous figures, no longer with us, typify the kind of literary impulse now in mind. The first was GEORGE HORATIO DERBY (1823–1861), an army officer, born of a good Massachusetts family, who spent a good deal of his life in the West, particularly in California. Here, under the name of John Phœnix, he took to writing

for the newspapers whimsical letters, two volumes of which had been collected and published before his death. In their day the *Squibob Papers* (1855) and *Phœnixiana* (1859), which grotesquely satirize life in California during the early days of American control there, were popular all over the country. To-day one feels their extravagance more than their fun; the whole thing seems overdone. John Phœnix, however, was undoubtedly among the earliest humorists of a school which has tended to produce better and better work.

About ten years after his time there came into notice a man whose name is still familiar both at home and in England. This was CHARLES FARRAR BROWNE (1834–1867). Born in Maine, first a printer, later a newspaper man, he drifted to Ohio, where about 1858 he became a reporter on the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. For this he began to write, over the signature of Artemus Ward, humorous articles which carried both the *Plain Dealer* and his pseudonym all over the country. Just before the Civil War he took charge of a comic weekly newspaper in New York. The war brought this venture to an end; for the rest of his life he was a "funny" lecturer. Like the humor of John Phœnix, that of Artemus Ward now seems tediously extravagant; and the essence of it lies in his inextricable confusion of fact and nonsense. He often assumes the character of a travelling showman, who has interviews not only with typical individuals of various classes, but with all sorts of notables, from Brigham Young to Queen Victoria. With these he talks on intimate terms; the fun lies chiefly in the grotesque incongruity between the persons concerned and what they say. Like Lowell in the *Biglow Papers*, he emphasizes his jests with mad misspelling and the like;

Artemus Ward.

but all his vagaries cannot conceal the sober confusion of literal statement and palpable absurdity which groups him, despite his errors of taste, with Lowell and Irving and the other humorists of our best literature.

In the history of American newspaper humor the grotesque extravagance of Artemus Ward stands midway between that of John Phœnix and that of a writer, who, though no longer alive, seems much nearer our own time. David Ross Locke (1833–1888) was born in a country village of New York. Like Artemus Ward, he was a printer, and later a reporter; later still he was editor of a local newspaper in Ohio. At the beginning of the Civil War he began to write political satires over the signature of Petroleum V. Nasby. The absurdity of this pseudonym typifies the pervasive absurdity of his misspelt and otherwise eccentric style. His satire, however, which was widely circulated at a moment of national crisis, dealt with matters of significance. He had come intimately to know the border regions between the North and the South. He was a strong Union man; and with all the grotesque mannerisms of newspaper humor he satirized Southern character and those phases of Northern character which sympathized with the constitutional contentions of the Confederacy. So in its day Nasby's work had political importance; it really helped solidify and strengthen Union sentiment.

Nasby.

Though, in general, American newspaper humor is not so significant, it has retained from Nasby's time the sort of contagious vitality found throughout his writings; and in one or two cases it has lately emerged into something better. The chief figure in recent journalistic humor is Finley Peter Dunne (1867–). From a Chicago

Mr. Dooley.

newspaper office, Mr. Dunne, in the irresistible brogue of "Mr. Dooley," an Irish saloon-keeper, has commented upon public affairs, often paying his respects to princes and great rulers, with a shrewd satire comparable to that of Lowell's *Biglow Papers*.

Chicago, whence these last examples of newspaper humor have come, is the chief centre of material activity in the Middle West. The consequent intellectual activity there has been great. We have already touched on the remarkable expression of this in the World's Fair of 1893. And though, in general, the intellectual life of Chicago has hardly reached the stage of memorable literary expression, it has produced two or three writers whom we cannot fail to notice. **Chicago**

Eugene Field (1850–1895), a journalist in various Western cities, who after 1883 lived in Chicago, proved in his later work something more than a writer of ephemeral fun. Among his collected writings, which include essays, tales, and poems, the verses about children are perhaps the most popular. In these, of which "Little Boy Blue" is a good example, Field avoids those lapses from good taste which mar some of his other work, and at the same time he is more than usually simple and tender. Quite as important for our purpose, however, are the pages, often extravagantly remote from seriousness, in which Field reveals his love for such sound literature as the Odes of Horace or the English and Scottish popular ballads. For all his eccentric and careless vivacity, these pages remind us, Field was at heart a true man of letters. **Field.**

More obviously so is Henry Blake Fuller (1857–), who first became known as the writer of a charming Italian fantasy, *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani* (1890). Since **Fuller, Herrick, Moody.**

that time he has written some vivid novels of Chicago life, as well as other books about the Italy to which he has turned for relief from the superficial materialism of the Illinois metropolis. A similar discontent with the material grossness of his surroundings animates the interesting novels of ROBERT HERRICK (1868–), a graduate of Harvard who has for some years been Professor of English at the University of Chicago. In discussing New England, we touched on the fact that Harvard has lately been sterile in the matter of literary production. In marked contrast to this sterility is the fact that not only Professor Herrick's fiction, but the genuine, if inarticulate poetry of another Harvard graduate, WILLIAM VAUGHAN MOODY (1869–), have come from active teachers in the one great American university which, when they made their reputations, was not ten years old.

Literature of Other Western Localities.

The Middle West has meanwhile produced literature elsewhere than in its chief material centre. From Indiana, for example, have come the widely but ephemerally popular historical novels of General LEW WALLACE (1827–); and the work of that sound historical writer, and novelist of "Hoosier" life, EDWARD EGGLESTON (1837–1902). From Indiana, too, has come the broadly popular work of JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (1853–), who, beginning, like Eugene Field, with journalism, has been chiefly known since 1875 for Hoosier lyrics of an admirable simplicity, humor, and pathos. From a man born in St. Louis, though now resident in the East, WINSTON CHURCHILL (1871–), have lately come the novels of American history, *Richard Carvel* (1899), *The Crisis* (1901), and *The Crossing* (1904), which have been most widely read. One might name many more industrious and worthy Western writers; but

they would hardly add definite features to the indistinct picture.

The Pacific slope, however, is a region as different from the Middle West—the West of tradition—as the West is from the Revolutionary colonies. And California has something like a literature of its own. Of the earlier Californian writers the chief was certainly FRANCIS BRET HARTE (1839–1902). Born in Albany, New York, he found himself at the age of fifteen in California. There he taught school and tried journalism until 1868, when he became editor of the *Overland Monthly*. In the second number of this journal was published "The Luck of Roaring Camp." This, which was speedily followed by "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," established Bret Harte's reputation as a writer of short stories. Only two years later, in 1870, he attained similar success in verse by writing "The Heathen Chinee." Soon after this he removed to the East, whence he presently went on to England, and there spent the rest of his life. California

Bret Harte continued writing Californian stories to the end. He never surpassed his beginnings; but he rarely fell much below them. The nineteen volumes of his collected works have the unusual charm of such vitality and vivacity that you can read through volume after volume without fatigue. And they record, in skilfully artistic form, the temper of the days when the bolder spirits of America were reducing to their control the lazy old Spanish colony which is now among the most American of the United States. Bret Harte.

Since Bret Harte left California, other writers there have set forth similar and later phases of Californian life. The verses of JOAQUIN MILLER (1841–)—*Songs of the Sierras* (1871) and his frequent later volumes—have a wild lyric Other Californian Writers.

quality rather Californian than Western. GELETT BURGESS (1866–), editor of *The Lark*, and author of the *Purple Cow*, has combined engaging nonsense with good-natured satire in a really novel way; and WALLACE IRWIN (1875–), in the *Love Sonnets of a Hoodlum* (1902), has humorously effected a seemingly impossible fusion of severe literary form and feeling with the wildest extravagance of dialect. And California has recently produced at least two remarkable writers of fiction. The novels of FRANK NORRIS (1870–1903), obviously modelled on those of Zola, have startling power; and the stories of Alaska and of the sea by JACK LONDON (1876–), obviously modelled on the style of Kipling, have power enough not to seem unworthy of their original.

Californian literature, in brief, has a quality which sometimes makes it seem singularly promising. From the conditions of life there, and the expression which these conditions have already evoked, one may expect work which shall combine with the freshness of feeling and the keen sense of fact characteristic of America a kind of emotional freedom—of warm and unrestrained artistic impulse—hitherto prevented elsewhere by an intensity of moral tradition from which the atmosphere of the Pacific slope is free. But as yet this temper has not reached any final stage of expression.

Partly from Californian influences, meanwhile, partly from Southern, and partly from those of the East, there has emerged the one remaining American man of letters who now deserves separate consideration.

VII

MARK TWAIN

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Life.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, "Mark Twain," (1835–), after an apprenticeship to a printer, became a pilot on the Mississippi River in 1851. Later he tried mining, and still later journalism, in California. Thence he removed to Hawaii, and finally to Hartford, Connecticut, where he lived till lately. In 1884 he founded the publishing firm of C. L. Webster & Company; he lost heavily by its failure. His subsequent labor to pay its debts suggests the similarly heroic efforts of Sir Walter Scott. His first book, *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches*, came out in 1867, *Innocents Abroad* in 1869, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876, *Life on the Mississippi* in 1883, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1885, *Pudd'n-head Wilson* in 1894, and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* in 1895–1896.

Humor.

The earlier work of Mark Twain seemed broadly comic —only another manifestation of that rollicking sort of journalistic fun which is generally ephemeral. As the

years have passed, however, he has slowly distinguished himself more and more from anyone else. No other living writer, for one thing, so completely exemplifies the kind of humor which is most characteristically American—a shrewd sense of fact expressing itself in an inextricable confusion of literal statement and wild extravagance, uttered with no lapse from what seems unmoved gravity of manner.

Scope.

But this is by no means the sum of him, nor yet his deepest merit. His more careful books show a grasp of his subject, a power of composition on the grand scale, unapproached by any other popular American. For all its faults of superficial taste, and for all its extravagance of dialect, *Huckleberry Finn* proves, as one compares it with its rough material, carelessly collected in *Life on the Mississippi*, nothing short of a masterpiece. And it proves as well, when one has read it over and over again, to be among the few books in any literature which preserve something like a comprehensive picture of an entire state of society. In this aspect it is Odyssean, just as *Don Quixote* is. There are moods when one is tempted to call it, despite its shortcomings, the masterpiece of literature in America.

Historical Sense.

It was this power of construction on a large scale, combined with profound human sympathy, which made more than one competent critic recognize Mark Twain's hand

in the originally anonymous *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*. In this he showed himself an historical novelist of positive importance. His more recent work has been apt to have the increasing seriousness of his honorable maturity. He has fearlessly written of public matters, and of various social and philosophic follies, and, whether you agree with him or not, you cannot fail to recognize his manly honesty, his unbroken vigor of thought and phrase, and his ripe individuality. His persistent humor proves less and less a matter of wildness or extravagance. It is his peculiar method of courageously commenting on life.

Summary

And throughout his work one finds innumerable turns of thought and of phrase which could proceed only from one whose whole being was born and developed not in one part of America or another, but surely and only in America. No one was ever, in the better sense of the word, a more instinctive and whole-souled man of the people. No one was ever more free from the spiritual vulgarity, as distinguished from mere errors of taste, which sometimes makes men of the people seem coarse. No one was ever more broadly human—sometimes with a broadness which the fastidious may lament, oftener with a breadth of sympathy which should shame whoever fails to share it. Mark Twain is often odd, but never eccentric. There is nowhere a sounder heart or a more balanced head than reveal themselves throughout the work of this man with whom none but Americans can quite feel complete fellowship, and with whom no true American can fail to feel it.

Walt Whitman has sometimes been called the most characteristic of Americans. But there can be little doubt that, long after the whims of Whitman have obscured what power was in him, the sanity and vigor of Mark

Real Americanism.

Twain will persistently show what the American spirit of his time really and truly was. This spirit has been broadly popular, odd in its expression, none too reverent in phrase or manner, often deceptive, consequently, to those whom phrase and manner may readily mislead, but full of good sense, full of kindly humor, and, above all, eager, while recognizing all the perversities of fact, to persevere towards righteousness.

VIII

CONCLUSION

It is obviously too soon to generalize safely about those more recent phases of literature in America on which we have just been touching. It is not too soon, however, to suggest some general considerations which arise as we consider the literary history of America as a whole.

This literary history of America is the story, under new conditions, of those ideals which a common language has compelled America, almost unawares, to share with England. These ideals which for three hundred years America and England have cherished, alike yet apart, are ideals of morality and of government—of right and of rights. General as these phrases must seem—common at first glance to the serious moments of all men everywhere—they have, for us of English-speaking race, a meaning peculiarly our own. The rights for which Englishmen and Americans alike have been eager to fight and to die are no prismatic fancies gleaming through clouds of conflicting logic and metaphor; they are that living body of customs and duties and privileges which experience has proved favorable to prosperity and to righteousness.

Threatened throughout history, both from without and from within, these rights can be preserved by nothing short of eternal vigilance. In this we have been faithful, until our deepest ideal of public duty, which marks Englishmen and Americans apart from others, and side by side,

is to protect our ancestral rights, not only from invasion or aggression attempted by other races than ours, but also from the internal ravages both of reaction and of revolution. In loyalty to this conception of duty, the nobler minds of England and of America have always been at one. Though to careless eyes the two countries have long seemed parted by a chasm wider even than the turbulent and foggy Atlantic, the differences which have kept England and America so long distinct have arisen from no more fatal cause than unwitting and temporary conflicts of their common law. The origin of both countries, as we know them to-day, was the England of Queen Elizabeth, with all its spontaneity, all its enthusiasm, all its untired versatility. From this origin England has sped faster and further than America. Throughout two full centuries America and England have consequently quarrelled, with faithful honesty, as to just what rights and liberties were truly sanctioned by the law which has remained common to both.

How their native tempers began to diverge we have already seen. During the seventeenth century England proceeded from its spontaneous, enthusiastic Elizabethan versatility, through the convulsions of the Civil Wars, to Cromwell's Commonwealth; and from the Commonwealth through the baseness of the Restoration and the renewing health of the Revolution of 1688, to that state of parliamentary government which still persists. English literature meanwhile proceeded from the age of Shakspere, through the age of Milton, to the age of Dryden. During this same seventeenth century—the century of American immigration—American history felt no such convulsion as the wars and tumults which destroyed Elizabethan

England. American character, which from the beginning possessed its still persistent power of absorbing immigration, accordingly preserved much of the spontaneity, the enthusiasm, and the versatility transported hither from the mother-country when Virginia and New England were founded. So far as literature went, meantime, seventeenth-century America expressed itself only in occasional historical records, and in a deluge of Calvinistic theology. Partly to these, and still more to the devout source from which they welled, is due the instinctive devotion of America to such ideals of absolute right and truth as were inherent in the passionate idealism of the Puritans.

It was here that America most distinctly parted from the mother-country. In England, the Puritan Commonwealth, with its nobly futile aspiration towards absolute right, so entwined itself about the life of Cromwell that when he died it fell. In America a similar commonwealth, already deeply rooted when Cromwell was still a sturdy country gentleman of St. Ives, flourished long after his relics had been cast out of Westminster Abbey. Generation by generation, the immemorial custom of America, wherein America has steadily discerned the features of its ancestral rights and liberties, grew insensibly to sanction more abstract ideals than ever long persisted in England.

Whoever will thus interpret the seventeenth century need be at little pains to understand the century which followed. The political events of this eighteenth century—the century of American independence—forced England into prolonged international isolation; and this, combined with reactionary desire for domestic order, bred in British character that insular conservatism still typified by the

portly integrity of John Bull. English literature meanwhile proceeded from the Addisonian urbanity of Queen Anne's time, through the ponderous Johnsonian formality which satisfied the subjects of George II, to the masterly publicism of Burke and the contagious popularity of Burns.

Since eighteenth-century America was politically free from the conditions which so highly developed the peculiar eccentricities of England, there is no wonder that American character still retained the spontaneity, the enthusiasm, and the versatility of the elder days when it had shared these traits with the English. Nor is there any wonder that Americans went on traditionally cherishing the fervent idealism of the immigrant Puritans, wherein for a while the ancestral English ideals of right and of rights had fused. Unwittingly lingering in its pristine state, the native character of America became less and less like the character which historical forces were irresistibly moulding in the mother-country. The traditional law of America seemed on its surface less and less like the more dogged and rigid system which was becoming the traditional law of England. Despite their common language, neither of the kindred peoples, separated not only by the wastes of the ocean but also by the forgotten lapse of five generations, could rightly understand the other. The inevitable result was the American Revolution.

The same causes which wrought this imperial disunion had tended to alter the literary character of America. American theology had already evaporated in metaphysical abstraction; its place, as the principal phase of American expression, had been taken by politics. Of this, no doubt, the animating ideal was not so much that of moral-

ity as that of law. Yet America would not have been America unless these ancestral ideals had remained blended. A yearning for absolute truth, an unbroken faith in abstract ideals, is what makes distinctly national the political utterances of the American Revolution. The love of abstract right which pervades them sprang straight from that aspiration towards absolute truth which had animated the grim idealism of the Puritans.

So came the nineteenth century—the century of American nationality, when, for all their community of language and of ideals, England and America have believed themselves mutually foreign. English history proceeded from the extreme isolation which ended at Waterloo, through the constitutional revolution of the Reform Bill to the reign of Queen Victoria. What the future may decide to have been the chief features of this Victorian epoch, it is still too soon to assert; yet the future can hardly fail to remember how, throughout these sixty and more years, England has continually developed in two seemingly divergent ways. At home, on the one hand, it has so tended towards democracy that already the political power of the English masses probably exceeds that of the American. In its world relations, on the other hand, England has become imperial to a degree undreamed of when Queen Victoria ascended the throne. Wherever the influence of England extends to-day, democracy and empire go hand in hand.

Throughout this nineteenth century America has had the Western Hemisphere almost to itself. This it has dominated with increasing material power, believing all the while that it could keep free from entanglement with other regions of the earth. From this youthful dream it

has at last been rudely awakened. In the dawning of a new century it finds itself—like England, at once democratic and imperial—inevitably confronted with world-conflict; either its ideals must prevail, or they must perish. After three centuries of separation, then, England and America are once more side by side. With them, in union, lies the hope of imperial democracy.

It is only during the nineteenth century—the century of American nationality—that America has brought forth literature. First appearing in the Middle States, this soon developed more seriously in New England, whose mental life, so active at first, had lain comparatively dormant for almost a hundred years. These two phases of American literary expression—that of older New York and that of renascent New England—are the only ones which may as yet be regarded as complete. They have been the chief subject of our study. On the impression which they have left with us must rest our estimate of what the literature produced in America has hitherto signified.

To define this impression, we may glance back at what the nineteenth century added to the literature of England. First came the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge and Shelley and Keats and Byron—a poetry, for all its individual variety, aflame with the spirit of world-revolution. Then, just after Waterloo, came those bravely ideal retrospective romances which have immortalized the name of Scott. The later literature of England has expressed the meanings of life discerned and felt by men whose mature years have fallen within the democratic and imperial reign of Queen Victoria. This literature includes the great modern novelists—Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot, with their host of contemporaries and followers; it in-

cludes the poetry of Tennyson, and of the Brownings, and of more; it includes a wealth of serious prose, the work of Macaulay, of Carlyle, of Ruskin, of Newman, of Matthew Arnold, and of numberless others; it includes the studied and fastidious refinement of Stevenson; it still happily includes the scope and power of writers now living.

In the nineteenth century English literature began with a passionate outburst of aspiring romantic poetry; it passed into an era of retrospective romantic prose; it proceeded to a stage where, for all the merit of persistent poetry, the chief fact seems to have been fiction dealing mostly with contemporary life; its serious prose, all the while, tended more and more to dwell on the problems of the times; and these surely underlie the utterances of its latest masters. The more one considers what the century has added to English literature, the more one marvels at its riches. Yet all the while one grows aware of something which, if not a loss, is at least a change. Throughout the century, English letters have slowly lapsed away from the grace of personal distinction. The literature of nineteenth-century England, like its history, expresses an irresistible advance of democracy.

Political democracy, no doubt, declared itself earlier and more outspokenly in America than in England. So far as literature is concerned, on the other hand, the first thirty years of the nineteenth century excited from America much less democratic utterances than came from the revolutionary poets of the mother-country. If you doubt this, compare Brockden Brown with Wordsworth, Irving with Coleridge, Cooper with Shelley, Bryant with Byron. What that earlier literature of the Middle States chiefly certifies of American character is that, whatever our vagaries of

occasional speech, we are at heart disposed, with good old English common-sense, to follow those lines of conduct which practice has proved safe and which prudence has pronounced admirable. The earlier literature of the Middle States has another trait which seems national: its sensitiveness of artistic conscience shows Americans generally to be more alive to artistic duty than Englishmen have often been. The first literary utterances of inexperienced America were marked by no wildness or vagary; they showed, rather, an almost timid loyalty to the traditions of excellence.

A few years later came what so far seems the nearest approach of America to lasting literature—the final utterances of New England during the years of its Renaissance, which, broadly speaking, were contemporary with the first half of the reign of Queen Victoria. The new life had begun, of course, somewhat earlier. It had first shown itself in the awakening of New England oratory and scholarship, and in the ardor which stirred Unitarianism to break the fetters of Calvinistic dogma. Scholarship bore fruit in the later works of the New England historians. Unitarianism tended, through Transcendentalism, to militant, disintegrating reform. Amid these freshening intellectual surroundings appeared some men whose names seem destined to live in the records of our literature. The chief of these were Emerson and Whittier and Longfellow and Lowell and Holmes and Hawthorne. If you compare them with the writers who in their time were most eminent in England—with Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, with Tennyson and the Brownings, with Carlyle and Ruskin, with Newman and Matthew Arnold—you can hardly help feeling a difference.

One phase of this difference soon grows clear. Though the writers of renascent New England were generally better in prose than in poetry—and thus resembled their English contemporaries—their spirit was rather like that which had animated the fervent English poetry of a generation before. Accepting the revolutionary doctrine that human nature is not evil but good, they confidently hoped that illimitable development was at hand for a humanity finally freed from the shackles of outworn custom. In this faith and hope the men of the New England Renaissance were sustained by a fact never true of any other civilized society than that from which they sprang. For more than two hundred years national inexperience had protected American character from such distortion as human nature always suffers under the pressure of dense population. Accordingly, with a justified enthusiasm, the literary leaders of New England, full of the earnest idealism inseparable from their Puritan ancestry, and finally emancipated from the dogmas which had reviled humanity, fervently proclaimed democracy. Here, at first, their temper seems to linger behind that of the mother-country. Such undimmed confidence as theirs in human nature was beginning to fade from English literature before the death of Scott.

Yet these New England writers were no mere exotic survivors of the days when English Romanticism was fervid. They were all true Americans; and this they could not have been without an almost rustic limitation of worldly knowledge, without a shrewd sense of fact which should at once correct the errors of such ignorance and check the vagaries of their idealism, or without exacting artistic conscience. Their devotion to the ideals of right and of rights came

straight from ancestral England. Their spontaneous aptitude for idealism, their enthusiastic love for abstractions and for absolute truth, they had derived, too, from the Elizabethan Puritans whose traits they had hereditarily preserved. What most surely marked them apart was the quality of their eager faith in democracy. To them this was no untested dream; it was rather a truth confirmed by the national inexperience of their still uncrowded country. Hence sprang the phase of their democratic temper which still seems most precious and most pregnant.

The spirit of European democracy has been dominated by blind devotion to an enforced equality. In many American utterances you may doubtless find thoughtless assertion of the same dogma. Yet if you will ponder on the course of American history, and still more if you will learn intimately to know those more eminent American men of letters who remain our teachers, you must grow to feel that American democracy has a wiser temper, still its own. The national ideal of America has never yet denied or even repressed the countless variety of human worth and power. It has urged only that men should enjoy liberty within the range of law. It has resisted both lingering and innovating tyranny; but all the while it has kept faithful to the principle that, so far as public safety may permit, each of us has an inalienable right to strive for excellence. In the presence of approved excellence it has remained humble.

The history of such future as we can now discern must be that of a growing world-democracy. And those who welcome this prospect are apt to hold that our most threatening future danger lurks in those dogged systems of authority which still strive to strangle human aspiration. No doubt these are dangerous, yet

sometimes there must seem even deeper danger in that phase of democracy itself which hates and condemns excellence. If in the conflicts to come, democracy shall overpower excellence, or if excellence, seeking refuge in freshly imperious assertion of authority, shall prove democracy another futile dream, the ways before us are dark. The more one dreads such darkness, the more gleams of counsel and help one may find in the simple, hopeful literature of inexperienced, renascent New England. There, for a while, the warring ideals of democracy and of excellence were once reconciled, dwelling confidently together in some earthly semblance of peace.

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